THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY UNFOLDED:

OR,

The False Apostles and the Authors of *POPERY* compared, in their secular Design and Means of accomplishing it, by Corrupting the Christian Religion, under pretence of Promoting it.

John 7. 18. *He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory.*

1 Tim. 6. 5. ——*Men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is Godliness.*

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THE

PREFACE.

THE *design of the following* Discourse *is to shew that* Popery *is founded in a like* worldly corrupt Interest *as the* way of the false Apostles *was*, and carried on by a like Art. *And if it shall appear to be so indeed, there will be no great cause to marvel, why the many worthy endeavours of the* Advocates *of the* Protestant Cause *to convince the* Papists *of being guilty of* corrupting *the Christian Religion, should prevail no more upon them than they have done; for such an* Interest *whilest adhered to, doth obstruct the operation of all such Truth on the Mind and Will, as tends to oppose or undermine it. So that upon the former supposition, we may well conceive, that the reason why*

the endeavours of the Perſons aforeſaid have prevailed no more upon the Gainſayers, is not the weakneſs of their Cauſe, nor weakneſs in their managing of it, nor yet the ſtrength of their Adverſaries Arguments in oppoſing them: but the true reaſon will be found to lye in the prevalence of a carnal, worldly corrupt Intereſt. *For that which was the reaſon why the Holy Apoſtles could not recover the* falſe Apoſtles *nor thoſe that ſtuck to them, from their* Errors *and* Corruptions, *we may well conceive to be the reaſon likewiſe, why the Advocates for Reformation have recovered no more than they have done of the* Papiſts *neither from* theirs, *which were introduced into the world, and perſiſted in upon the ſame or like carnal reaſon and motive, as the Corruptions of the falſe Apoſtles were.*

Now our Adverſaries themſelves cannot but grant that the reaſon why the Holy Apoſtles prevailed no more upon the falſe Apoſtles and their followers than they did, in managing the Chriſtian Cauſe againſt them in corrupting the Chri-

Christian Religion, was neither the badness of their own, *nor goodness of their* adversaries Cause, *nor the Holy Apostles weak managing of their* Cause: *and if none of these were the reason, what else could it be in probability, but the false Apostles love of, close adherence to, and fast holding of such a* corrupt Interest, *as could not be* upheld *but by* corrupting *the Christian Religion? And if the Holy Apostles who were extraordinarily assisted in delivering and speaking Truth, and who had their Doctrine extraordinarily confirmed with Signs, and Wonders, and divers Miracles, could not for all that prevail with the false Apostles to confess and relinquish their Errors, so long as a Worldly Interest was upheld by those Errors, and was dearer to them than the Truth it self; 'tis then no wonder at all if our Protestant Advocates, who do not pretend to compare with the Apostles, have prevailed no more neither than they have done, (though their Cause be never so good, and so well managed,) to bring Popish Guides to acknowledge and relinquish*

linquish those Errors of theirs, by which their corrupt Interest is supported and maintained, if that Interest is dearer to them also than that Truth that oppoſeth it, and fights against it, is, as there is too much ground to ſuſpect it is.

Some perhaps may be under a temptation, to have the more favourable opinion of Popery, for that there have been men of great Parts and Learning of that way; who upon that account may perhaps be thought as able as their Adverſaries to diſcern Truth from Error. But if thoſe, who ſo think, will but conſider, that thoſe Learned men have ſtill had a ſtrong byas of a corrupt Intereſt to draw them aſide; they may eaſily relieve themſelves againſt ſuch a temptation. For the greater parts ſuch men have, as have eſpouſed a corrupt Intereſt, and are ſtrongly bent to defend it, the leſs likely are they to be overcome meerly by Truth: Becauſe it hath always been too common with ſuch men to imploy all their Parts and Learning to the uttermoſt, not indifferently and impartially to ſeek Truth for Truths ſake,

to

but to make the beſt they can of the Cauſe they have undertaken, and with all poſſible Art to dreſs it up, that neither they, nor any of their party may fall into diſlike of it. Which was the reaſon why the learned Scribes, Lawyers, Phariſees, and Rulers among the Jews, ſtood it out againſt Chriſt, when the more illiterate and meaner ſort that were not under ſuch a temptation of a worldly intereſt as the others were, nor had ſuch parts to ſtrengthen themſelves in their oppoſition as the others had, were ſooner brought to receive Chriſt and ſubmit to his Doctrine. Of ſuch as the former ſort our Saviour ſaid, how can ye believe which ſeek honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour which comes from God only? *Joh.* 5. 44. *The experience of ſuch a thing as this, doubtleſs occaſioned that ſaying of St.* Paul, 1 Cor. 1. 26. You ſee your calling brethren, how that not many wiſe men after the fleſh are called, nor many mighty, nor many noble.

Beſides, as the Love of a corrupt Intereſt in men calls off their thoughts from an impartial enquiry after Truth, eſpecially ſuch Truth as oppoſeth it; ſo it corrupts the mind and clouds the underſtanding of Learned as well as Unlearned, in making a Judgment of what's Truth and what's Error, in thoſe things wherein ſuch an Intereſt is concerned. 'Tis ſaid a Gift blindeth the wiſe and perverteth the judgment of the righteous, *Exod.* 23. 8. *It hinders a man from enquiring impartially into the right of the others cauſe againſt whom he hath received a bribe: and cauſeth him with as much partiality to conſider his, from whom he hath received it, and is a byas as well as a cloud upon his mind in forming a judgment upon the Cauſe before him: by reaſon of all which he gives judgment againſt the truth and equity of the Cauſe. And there is the ſame reaſon why a corrupt Intereſt otherwiſe, ſhould hinder a right judgment and determination in matters wherein that Intereſt is ſtruck at, as there*

there is, why the corrupt Intereſt of a bribe ſhould hinder it, in a man otherwiſe knowing and wiſe.

Our Saviour ſaith, if thine eye be evil, thy whole body ſhall be full of darkneſs: if therefore the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs? *Mat.* 6. 23. *If the governing principle in man be corrupt, as it is when that which is predominant is covetouſneſs or the love of the world, (of which he there ſpeaks) the iſſues of it can be no more pure than the ſtreams that flow from a corrupt Fountain: that corrupt governing principle will ſtill be turning men aſide in particular actions of their Lives, and in making a judgment of thoſe things wherein their corrupt Intereſt is oppoſed, or immediately or remotely ſtruck at.* For men cannot ſerve God and Mammon (*as there it follows*) *they cannot be faithful to God and his Truth, where a love to him and a care to pleaſe him, do not bear a greater ſway than love to* Mammon *or any other worldly concern doth.*

Add we yet to all this one consideration more, and that is, That when men have more love for, and pleasure in unrighteousness, for worldly advantage sake, than love to Truth for Truths sake, and what attends a sincere receiving of it, the Scripture hath told us, that for that very cause God shall send such (*learned men not excepted*) strong delusions, that they should believe a lie; *to think and believe verily they have fast hold of Truth, when yet* they have but a lie in their right hand, 2 *Thes.* 2. 10, 11, 12. *God in just judgment giving them up to an injudicious mind to call evil good, and good evil.*

These things shew how little in reason the consideration of the learning and parts of any of the Popish party ought to weigh with those who upon the account of them are inclined to entertain any whit the more favourable opinion of their way, when they consider as they ought, that their Learning and Parts are in conjunction with a corrupt Interest.

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As for the Laity or Common people of the Popiſh perſwaſion, I will not ſay, that a worldly corrupt Intereſt doth ſo much prevail on them immediately, *to be or to continue to be what they are in point of Popery, as it doth with their Clergie; but at the* Second hand *it doth prevail on them alſo. For they acting by an Implicite faith, believing as their Church-men believe, and ſeeing not with their own, but with* their *eyes, and taking all on truſt from them, and giving up themſelves intirely to their Conduct; it follows neceſſarily, that if a corrupt Intereſt miſguide their Guides,* they *alſo muſt needs become ſeduced by means of it. So that what was ſaid to the people of* Iſrael *of old, is truly applicable unto them:* O my people, they which lead thee cauſe thee to err. *But that will be no excuſe to them who ſuffer themſelves to be ſo miſled:* For if the blind lead the blind, *you know who hath ſaid,* they both ſhall fall into the ditch.

Now if Popery ſhall be found indeed

to be founded in a like ſecular carnal corrupt Intereſt as the corrupt Doctrine and Practice of the falſe Apoſtles was, (and whether it be or no, I leave you to judge by what the following diſcourſe offers you) then that alone would be enough to blaſt the Reputation of it for ever in the minds of all ſuch as have judgment in Spiritual things. For by this very thing did St. John *diſcriminate the falſe Teachers and Degenerate Chriſtians and their way, from the Orthodox and Sincere, and* their *way.*

They, *(ſaith he)* are of the world, therefore ſpeak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 1 *Jo.* 4. 5, 6. They are of the world, i. e. *they were men of worldly minds, and ſuch as chiefly deſigned a worldly Intereſt, they were ſuch as did* mind earthly things, *as it is elſewhere expreſt,* Phil. 3. 18. *therefore they* ſpeak of the world, i. e. *the Doctrine which they taught, ſo far as it was Falſe, was calculated to promote a worldly corrupt Intereſt:* And the world heareth them, *that*

is,

is, earthly minded men, pretenders to Religion, received their Doctrine as falling in with their worldly deſign. But we, *ſaith St. John,* are of God, he that knoweth God, heareth us, i. e. *received their Doctrine which drew men off from the world to God:* He that is not of God, heareth not us: Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of error: *behold here a plain Diſcrimination of who, and whoſe way is of God, and whoſe is not, with whom the Spirit of Truth is found, and with whom the Spirit of Error.*

If the Authors of Popery then, and their followers, have adopted into their Religion as a part of it, any corrupt Doctrine or Practice for worldly advantage ſake, as the falſe Teachers of old did; then they, *we ſee, as well as thoſe falſe Teachers, are markt out by St.* John, *as being not of God, but of the world, and as men that are miſguided by a Spirit of Errour. And although by wreſting the Scriptures and corrupting the Word of God, they think*

to colour over and patronize their corrupt Doctrines and Practices, just as the false Apostles before them did; yet their Arguings thence, are but of the same nature with the Reasonings of the false Apostles in like cases, which were, as St. Paul *calls them, but* perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness, 1 *Tim.* 6. 5.

I have in the following Papers shewed how St. Paul's *Complying with the Jews in some Rites of the Jewish worship, upon account of Expedience, was quite of a different nature from the corrupt Complyances of the false Apostles and their party And from that prudential and expediential complyance of his, I have in an Appendix by parity of Reason argued the expediency of yielding to the use of some things in or about the external form of Gods Worship, which are neither directly commanded nor forbidden by God, when circumstances render such a yielding necessary to prevent Divisions in the Church,*

and

and the bad Conſequences of them, and to preſerve Peace and Charity in it, and the better to further the free courſe of the Goſpel. And this I have done the rather, leſt any ſhould think that ſuch a yielding as aforeſaid, ſhould be of like nature with thoſe corrupt compliances of the falſe Apoſtles and their Party, which are repreſented to view in the following Diſcourſe.

As for thoſe who have hitherto eſcaped the ſnares of Popery, the proper uſe of the enſuing Tract for them, is, to fortifie them againſt all Temptations of turning Papiſts, of what nature ſoever the Temptation may be: Always remembring, that ſuch as follow the falſe Apoſtles in corrupting the Chriſtian Religion to avoid Perſecution, or for any worldly advantage whatſoever, muſt expect to ſhare with them in their fate *alſo, of whom it is ſaid,* their end ſhall be according to their works, 2 *Cor.* 11. 15.

And ſince you will find by the proceſs of the Diſcourſe before you, that the Corruptions both in Faith and Practice, firſt

firſt in the falſe Apoſtles and their followers, and after them in the Papiſts, did ariſe and ſpring out of an inordinate *love of the world: the conſideration thereof may ſerve as a Sea-mark to warn us to take heed of that Rock upon which ſo many profeſſours of Chriſtianity have made ſhipwrack of it. This running into the Spirit of the World, hath always been fatal to the Churches: As it laid waſte at laſt the once famous flouriſhing Churches of the Apoſtles own planting; ſo it hath ſince depreſt and kept many others very low in their Spiritual ſtate, and is of ill abode, as to their future ſtanding. And there is ſo much the more danger of falling into an undue and deſtructive love of the things of this world, becauſe we have need of them, daily uſe them, familiarly converſe with them: and becauſe men generally are very unable to diſcern the parting difference between a lawful and unlawful degree of love to them, and ſo are very apt inſenſibly to paſs over from the one into the other. And therefore*

there

there is great reaſon to be jealous of our affections in this reſpect, and diligent to obſerve their motion and manner of operation towards the world, and continually to be following them with conſiderations, that all the things of this world are at beſt but Temporal, and uſeful only for a little ſeaſon, and that our main Concern lies in the things of another world that are for Eternity; in compariſon of which, the things of this World are of no weight, when a judgment and eſtimate of both is rightly made. By the Knowledge, Belief, and practical conſideration of this it was, that the Holy Apoſtles and all ſincere Chriſtians then, did overcome the world, when their worldly and ſpiritual, their temporal and eternal Intereſt came in competition. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith, *ſaith St. John*, 1 *Ep.* 5 4. And though our outward man periſh, yet the inward man is renewed day by day, while we look not at the things which are ſeen, but the things which

are

are not ſeen; for the things which are ſeen, are temporal, but the things which are not ſeen, are eternal, *ſaith St. Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 16, 18. *And it was by that* faith *which is the* Subſtance or confident expectation of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen, *by which* Abraham, Moſes *and the reſt of thoſe Worthies in elder times, became ſuch famous inſtances of overcoming the world, as they were*, Heb. 11. *And our bleſſed Saviour* for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs and deſpiſed the ſhame, *yea and contemned the Grandeur of the world too, when he was tempted thereby to that which was incongruous to the end of his coming.*

If any ſhall think the publiſhing of theſe papers might well be ſpared, conſidering the many tranſcending pieces againſt Popery which are already extant; I confeſs I ſhould have thought ſo too, (eſpecially conſidering the Author) had it not been that the way of proceeding againſt Popery uſed therein,

in, by comparing it with the corrupt Religion of the falſe Apoſtles, hath not, ſo far as I have obſerved, been much made uſe of by others, unleſs only in ſome glances which look that way. And yet what can expoſe Popery more to the diſlike, even of every vulgar apprehenſion, than to diſcover its likeneſs to the Religion of the falſe Apoſtles, who preached Chriſt indeed as theſe of this way alſo do, but they did it not ſincerely, but added to, and mixt with the doctrine and Religion of Chriſt, and that as neceſſary to Salvation, things of quite a different nature and contrary tendency, even as theſe likewiſe do, Phil. 1. 15, 16.

Beſides, as by diſcovering the true nature of the corrupt Religion of the falſe Apoſtles and their Proſelytes, (a thing which is endeavoured in the following diſcourſe) we may take meaſure of, and eſtimate the nature of Popery when we find, as we may, a likeneſs between them; So perhaps the Readers of more ordinary

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Capacities, may find ſuch further benefit thereby, as to come to a better underſtanding of many places and paſſages in the Holy Apoſtles Epiſtles, relating to the way of falſe Teachers, as, without knowing in ſome meaſure what the corrupt Principles and Practices of the falſe Apoſtles were and their ill effects in the Churches, can hardly be underſtood. And if that may, though nothing elſe ſhould, be gained thereby, yet that alone I hope would in ſome meaſure recompence the pains of ſuch *Readers in peruſing the ſaid diſcourſe: From which I ſhall detain them no longer, this being all I have to ſay by way of preface; craving their pardon for the length of it.*

THE

THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY UNFOLDED.

BY a collection of ſundry paſſages ſcattered up and down in the Writings of the Holy Apoſtles of our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, it may eaſily be diſcerned how and for what end, and under what pretence the falſe Apoſtles in the Primitive times corrupted the Chriſtian Religion. And by comparing here-with the Chriſtian Religion as now corrupted by Popery, together with its end and deſign, and the *pretence* under which

it hath been managed by the Authors of it, and Guides of the people of that perſwaſion, thoſe that halt between two opinions in the Caſe to be enquired into, and that have any deſire to be led into the way of Truth on which hand ſoever it falls, may eaſily come to a clear Reſolution and full ſatisfaction, who are in the error, the Papiſts or the Proteſtants.

In order to the Compariſon thus to be made, and to the ſatisfaction that is thereby to be attained, I muſt repreſent to you from the Scriptures theſe two things.

1. What the deſign of the falſe Apoſtles was in managing the Chriſtian profeſſion to ſo ill purpoſe as they did.

2. In what way and by what means, they carried on their deſign. After I have done this I ſhall draw the Parallel between the falſe Apoſties and Authors of Popery, and ſhew how the Authors of Popery have followed the falſe Apoſtles in both End and Means.

S. 1. I ſhall begin with the firſt of theſe, and ſhew what the deſign of the falſe Apoſtles was in managing the Chriſtian profeſſion ſo unchriſtianly as they did. And to make way for the better underſtanding of that, I ſhall briefly touch upon the *Riſe* of them, and the occaſion of it. The ſincere profeſſion of Chriſtianity being attended at the firſt, and for a long time after, with ſore perſecution; there were ſome of that Profeſſion, and probably Teachers too, who being neither willing wholly to relinquiſh it, nor yet to ſuffer ſo much as a faithful and thorough adherence to the doctrine and precepts of the Goſpel did expoſe men to; did caſt about how they might retain a profeſſion of the Goſpel, and yet avoid any great or conſiderable ſuffering for it: And in concluſion reſolved upon this, *viz.* to *Comply* with their Adverſaries in ſome things pertaining to the Religion and way which they profeſt, (of which I ſhall ſpeak more particularly afterwards) whereby they took

off the keenness of their opposition, and provided for their own ease and security. Some pretences they found out for so doing, wherewith they endeavoured to satisfie themselves, and others (as well as they could) whom they laboured to draw in to make a party: Just as St. *Paul* foretold the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, saying: *Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away Disciples after them*, Acts 20. 30.

And being opposed herein by the faithful Apostles, they used all the art they could to defend and justifie what they had done, and had perswaded others to do. And to render the opposition they had herein from the holy Apostles the less available in the eyes of others, they sought by one means or another to disparage them, and to undermine the authority and reputation they had in the hearts of the Christians. And by these means they corrupted and drew away many after them; and that not of the more ordinary Disciples only, but probably many

ny of those also who were become preachers of the Gospel; whereof it may be *Demas* might be one, who as St. *Paul* said, *had forsaken him and embraced this present world.* And indeed this Contagion spread so fast, and prevailed so much, that St. *Paul* complained, saying, *all seek their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ*, Phil. 2. 21.

Thus having given you an account of the Rise of the False Teachers in the Apostles days, I shall now give you a more particular and full account of their design. And their *Design* as I have already intimated, was *worldly:* it was to *Secure* and *Procure a worldly corrupt interest.* It is not unlikely but that at the first their design in complying so much as they did with the profest enemies of Christianity, was only to *avoid* those sufferings for the Gospel sake, which the sincere Christians were exposed to and underwent, both in their persons and estates. But afterwards when they had carried away many by their de-

ceits, and were become the Head and ring-leaders of a Party; a farther worldly advantage offered it self and came in prospect, (which we may well conceive they were not so dull as not to perceive, nor so careless and negligent as not to pursue) and that was an opportunity of *Gain*, of making *merchandize* of the seduced Christians; (besides the opportunity of gratifying their *ambition* in becoming the Head of a Party.) As the false Prophets of old, and the corrupt Priests, when by prophesying and preaching pleasing things to the people, they found no small benefit in the liberal gifts and rewards that course did procure, were encouraged to make a trade of so doing (in which respect those Prophets were said *to divine for money*, and those Priests *to teach for hire:*) even so the false Apostles also perceiving that to be a thriving way, applyed themselves to preach for Doctrine such things as pleased the unsound and timorous professors of the Gospel, and so made their carnal ends on them.

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They taught things which they ought not, for filthy lucre ſake, as St. *Paul* ſaith, and thereby *ſubverted whole houſes*, *Tit.* 1. 11. They found that the preaching ſuch looſe Doctrine in point of compliance as tended to eaſe the profeſſors of Chriſtianity of the burden of perſecution, was very *gainful*; it gained them many Proſelytes, for they came in by *whole houſholds* we ſee; and it gained them much of filthy lucre alſo. For their Proſelytes grew very kind to them for teaching them an eaſier and ſafer way of profeſſing Chriſtianity than they knew before. Yea, ſo it was that the poor deluded people became ſo much their ſervants upon account of that ſatisfaction they took in that new diſcovery, that St. *Paul* upbraided ſome of them with it in theſe words: *Ye ſuffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himſelf, if a man ſmite you on the face*, 2 Cor. 11. 20.

The deſign of theſe men to be a worldly and fleſhly deſign, is plenti-

fully as well as plainly discovered in the Epistles of the Apostles. The sincere Christians indeed ventured all their worldly concerns, and sacrificed all their worldly interest upon the service of the Gospel, their holy profession, and their own Souls: but these men as St. *Paul* characteriseth them, were *enemies to the Cross of Christ*, they were such as made *their belly their God*, and *minded earthly things*, Phil. 3. 18, 19. They were enemies to the great duty of taking up the Cross and suffering for Christ, earthly things having more of their heart than he had. These who by their pleasing doctrine aforesaid, caused divisions and offences among the Christians, contrary to the Doctrine which they had learned from the true Apostles, were such as *served not the Lord Jesus Christ*, whatever they pretended, *but their own bellies*, Rom. 16. 17, 18. And St. *Peter* describing them, saith, *they had hearts exercised with covetous practises, having forsaken the right way, and going astray, followed the way of Balaam*

Balaam the ſon of Boſor who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs, 2 Pet. 2. 14, 15. *They ran greedily after the way of Balaam for reward*, as *Jude* hath it, verſ. 11. *And through covetouſneſs with feigned words, they made merchandiſe of the people*, whom they deluded, 2 Pet. 2. 3.

Now in caſe of Perſecution, 'tis true indeed that when Chriſt ſent forth his Diſciples as Sheep among Wolves; he adviſed them to *be wiſe as Serpents, but innocent as Doves:* to uſe as much prudence for the avoiding of perſecution as would conſiſt with innocency, *Mat.* 10. 16. And no doubt but that the ſincereſt Chriſtians were willing enough to make uſe of all the prudence they had to ſhun perſecution ſo far as lawfully they might. But yet were ſtill careful to preſerve and maintain their own innocency and integrity in all they did in that kind, and not in the leaſt to betray the Cauſe of Chriſt: And therefore they could ſay in thoſe ſuffering times; *This is our rejoycing, the teſtimony of our Conſcience,*

science, that in simplicity and Godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom (as the false Apostles) *but by the Grace of God we have had our conversation in the world*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. But the false Apostles and their followers, used so much subtilty and carnal policy to avoid the Cross, as that the wisdom of the Serpent did devour the innocency of the Dove. They made themselves *friends of the world* indeed by unlawful compliance, and by *adulterating* the Christian Religion by impure mixtures: but then they thereby made themselves *enemies to God*, as St. *James* saith, in betraying his Truth and Cause, *James* 4. 4.

By the way then we may see by what hath been said, how dangerous a thing it is inordinately to desire and love the friendship of the world & the accommodations of this present life: it is we see that which hath betrayed multitudes, otherwise in a hopeful way of Salvation, into cursed and destructive Practises. *They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into*

into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition: for the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have been seduced from the Faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows, saith St. *Paul*, speaking of those corrupt Christians whose inordinate love to the things of this world, drew them into such sinful Compliances to preserve them, as were inconsistent with Christianity in the truth and power of it, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9, 10.

Love not the world nor the things of the world, saith St. *John* to those who were in danger of being corrupted by the false Apostles through love to the world: *for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world*, 1 John 2. 15, 16. Here's a brief description of that love of the world which is disallowed by God and a snare of death to men. The lust of the Eye is covetousness; which is a

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transgression of the rule of righteousness or moderation in desiring or getting; or the rule of Piety or Charity in keeping the things of this world. The lust of the Flesh is a transgressing of the Laws of Sobriety, Temperance and Chastity, in using them: And the pride of Life is, a transgression of the Laws of Modesty and Humility in using undue means to draw honour and esteem from men. Now then when St. *John* saith, *if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*, his meaning seems to be this; that when any man lives in the breach of any of Gods Commandments, in Coveting, Getting, Keeping, or Using the things of this world; that's the man that so loves the world, as that the love of the Father is not in him. For as the love of God, according to this Apostle, consisteth in keeping his Commandments, as he saith, Chap. 5. 3. *This is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments*; So the not loving the Father but the world, consists in the breach of his Commandments, in Coveting,

veting, Getting, Keeping, or Uſing the friendſhip or the things of the world. And thus the falſe Apoſtles were lovers of the world. They were willing to be for God and the Goſpel, ſo long and ſo far as their being ſo did not deprive them of their worldly accommodations; but wherein it did, ſo that they could no longer *ſerve two Maſters, God and Mammon*, without faultering with one of them; then and in thoſe particular caſes when ſuch a Competition did occur, they were wont ſtill to cleave to their worldly intereſt, but to turn their back upon God and the Goſpel. For which cauſe they were compared to *Eſau*, and ſtiled prophane perſons like him, *Heb.* 12. 16. For as *Eſau* preferred ſo inconſiderable a thing as a meſs of Pottage, becauſe of the *preſentneſs* of the ſatisfaction he expected thereby, before the far more deſirable priviledges and benefits of Birth-right and Heirſhip, becauſe they for a great part at leaſt were not to be received till *afterwards*: So theſe lovers of, and deſigners

ſigners for this preſent world, did chuſe eaſe and other worldly accommodations, becauſe *preſent*, rather than the better hope of eternal life, becauſe *abſent and to come*. This was the root of bitterneſs in the perſons of Seducers, againſt the ſpringing up of which among the Chriſtians, the Author of this Epiſtle had cautioned them, v. 15. At that time when the caſe was ſo, that *all that would live godly in Chriſt Jeſus muſt ſuffer perſecution*, there was no way of retaining a profeſſion of Chriſtianity and their worldly eaſe and enjoyments too, but by corrupting the Chriſtian Religion, and making it another thing than the Author of it had made it; which was the thing the falſe Apoſtles laboured to bring the Chriſtians to, under deluſive pretences, that they might ſave themſelves from ſuffering: which brings me to what is next to be diſcourſed, and that is to ſhew how unworthily theſe falſe Teachers corrupted the Chriſtian Religion to attain their worldly end and baſe deſign.

S. 2. The

S. 2. The next thing then which, as I ſaid, I propoſed to ſhew, was how, in what way, and by what means the falſe Apoſtles carried on their worldly deſign, of which I have been ſpeaking: how in particular they ordered things in their profeſſion of Chriſtianity, ſo as to ſecure their end, and to ſerve their deſign for this world. In doing of which I ſhall ſhew firſt, that to this end they *corrupted* the Chriſtian Religion by their ſinful mixtures. Secondly, that they did this, and carried on their whole deſign for the world under a *Religious pretence.*

Firſt they corrupted the Chriſtian Religion on purpoſe to ſerve their deſign. They corrupted it partly by adding other things to it which were of a contrary nature; and partly by ſiniſter and corrupt interpretations of the Chriſtian Doctrine, and of the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, to countenance thoſe additions, either as *lawful*, or as *neceſſary*. And thus they abuſed the Scriptures touching the uſe of the Law of *Moſes*, by miſconſtruction

ction and misapplication. They would be esteemed for judicious *teachers of the Law, when they understood not what they said, nor whereof they affirmed*, 1 Tim. 1. 7. They taught Circumcision and the observation of other Rites of the Law of *Moses* to be necessary to the Salvation of Christian Gentiles, when their doing so served their carnal design, though otherwise they made no conscience of keeping the Law themselves. *For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the Law; but desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh*, said St. *Paul* of them, *Gal.* 6. 13. but more of this afterwards. St. *Peter* also tells us that they wrested things in St. *Paul*'s Epistles, and other Scriptures to their own destruction. *They walked in craftiness and handled the word deceitfully*, as St. *Paul* reflects it upon them, in 2 *Cor.* 4. 2. and so he doth again when he saith, *we are not as many which corrupt the word of God*, 2 Cor. 2. 17. By an unkindly violence which they offered to it, they made it seemingly,

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and in the eyes of weak and injudicious and credulous perſons, to countenance what they did in proſecution of their carnal deſign. And although theſe falſe appearances were but *ſlight*, and ſuch as had nothing ſatisfying in them to an unprejudiced and diſcerning mind, yet they would ſerve for *demonſtrations* and paſs for good proof with thoſe who were willing and deſirous to have thoſe things prove true, which the falſe Apoſtles pretended to be ſo. Like as when the falſe Prophets of old *propheſied falſly, the people loved to have it ſo*, becauſe it was for their carnal intereſt to have that prove true which they propheſied. But this only in general.

But to come more particularly to the buſineſs, and to ſhew how they corrupted the Chriſtian Religion to ſave them from ſuffering, and to compaſs their farther ends. The ſincere Chriſtians were in great danger of ſuffering the loſs of all the things of this world for Chriſt and the Goſpel ſake, from two ſorts of enemies to

Christianity, the unbelieving *Jews*, and the unbelieving *Gentiles*. To avoid which, the False Apostles taught themselves first, and others after, somewhat to *comply* with these Enemies of Christianity, in *mixing* somewhat of their Rites and Usages with it, on purpose to take off the edge of that Opposition and Persecution they before suffered from them, and by degrees thereby to reconcile them to themselves, and to their Religion.

This Device of theirs occasion'd those jealous apprehensions St. *Paul* had of the *Corinthians*, after the False Apostles got among them, which he thus expresseth, in 2 *Cor.* 11. 2, 3. *I am jealous over you with godly jealousie: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chast virgin to Christ. But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

S. 3. First, for the unbelieving *Jews*, they

they, we know, were fierce Enemies againſt all that profeſſed the Chriſtian Religion, labouring to raiſe Perſecution againſt them every where. To take off the edge of which, as I ſaid, the Falſe Apoſtles became Factors for *Judaiſm*, and ſo fell to perſwade the believing *Gentiles* to mix and compound *Judaiſm* and *Chriſtianity* together, as an Expedient both to ſave themſelves from Perſecution, and to win their Adverſaries to a liking of Chriſtianity. Of this attempt we read in *Acts* 15. 1. *Certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and ſaid, Except ye be circumciſed after the manner of Moſes, ye cannot be ſaved.* And again, *ver.* 5. *There aroſe certain of the ſect of the Phariſees, which believed, ſaying, That it was needful to circumciſe them, and to command them to keep the law of Moſes.* That ſuch a thing as this was done, to avoid Perſecution from the *Jews*, appears from *Gal.* 6. 12, 13. *As many as make a fair ſhew in the fleſh, they conſtrain you to be circumciſed, onely leſt they ſhould*

suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. That they did it not so much out of Conscience, as for this politick end, appears by *ver.* 13. *For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law, but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh,* as having now made them as well Proselytes to the *Jewish* way, as before they were to *Christianity.*

That this way of compliance in the *Christians* with the *Jews,* was effectual to secure them from Persecution from the *Jews,* appears likewise from *Gal.* 5. 11. *And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, then is the offence of the cross ceased.* Upon this account doubtless it was, that some corrupt *Christians* pretended themselves to *be Jews, who were not, but were of the synagogue of Satan,* as we read *Rev.* 2.9. & 3.9.

Now this way of joyning and commixing *Judaism* and *Christianity* together, set on foot by false Teachers, under the Pretences aforesaid, took dangerously among Professors of *Christianity;*

ſtianity; which was the occaſion of thoſe large Diſcourſes touching Juſtification by Faith, without the Works of the Law, which we have in St. *Paul's* Epiſtles both to the *Romans* and *Galatians*. The plain meaning of which was, That the obſervation of the Law of *Moſes* in the *Jewiſh* way, was not neceſſary to Salvation in *Chriſtians*, as the falſe Apoſtles had taught it to be; and that it was unneceſſary for the *Gentile* Believers to be brought over to it; and that the Religion revealed and preſcribed in the Goſpel, called *The Faith*, and this alone, without adding *Judaiſm* to it, was both neceſſary and ſufficient to Salvation. And, by the way, thoſe that from the Apoſtles Reaſoning hereabout, would oppoſe the Works of Evangelical Obedience to Faith, in the Point of Juſtification, do greatly miſtake the Apoſtle in his deſign and way of Reaſoning.

S. 2. Secondly, the falſe Teachers, to avoid Perſecution, and the loſs of

all for the Gospels sake, from the *Heathen* or unbelieving *Gentiles*, struck in with them also in part, and taught the *Christians*, that it was lawful for them to comply with their Idolatrous Neighbours, so far as to go with them to their Idol-feasts, and to eat things sacrificed to Idols, so long as they did not *intentionally*, and in their minds, do it in any honour to the Idol, but kept their mind to God. Some such as these were in the Church of *Pergamos*, *Revel.* 2. 14. *I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to Idols, and to commit fornication.* Such also were in the Church of *Thyatira*, ver. 20. *I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezabel, which calleth her self a Propheteſs, to teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto Idols.*

That this was taught and practised

as

as lawful, ſo long as it was not done intentionally to honour or worſhip the Idol, as the Infidels did, I gather from St. *Paul's* Diſcourſe in 1 *Cor.* 8. In *ver.* 1. he ſaith, *Now as touching things offered to Idols, we know that we all have knowledge.* Knowledge of what? This he delivers more expreſly in *ver.* 4. *We know that an Idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.* This it ſeems was that which they pleaded in juſtification of their Practice of going to the Idols Temple, and of eating of things ſacrificed to the Idols: They *knew* that the Idol was nothing, and therefore did not *intend* any worſhip to it in what they did. The Apoſtle ſuppoſeth this to be true, and grants indeed, that they, and all Perſons generally, that owned the *Chriſtian* Faith, did know that an Idol is nothing, and that there is no other God but one, and that therefore probably ſuch could not be ſuppos'd to eat of the Idol-ſacrifice with intent to worſhip the Idol: But yet this Knowledge

was not *universal*, among all without exception, that had begun to own *Christianity*; as he shews in *ver.* 7. saying, *Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the Idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an Idol, and their conscience being weak is defiled.* And so argues the unlawfulness of their Practice, upon the account of *scandal* to weak Brethren, to the end of the Chapter. But in the tenth Chapter, where he reassumes this Business again, he argues plainly, That whatever their knowledge or intention was, yet that by that Practice they had communion with the Idol or Devils, to whom indeed the Offering was made. See from *ver.* 14. to *ver.* 22.

It was for this Seduction by false Teachers, that St. *Peter* and *Jude* do so earnestly inveigh against them, as *following the way of Balaam for reward*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 15. *Jude* 11. And *Balaam's* way, we know, was to teach *Balac* to draw the *Israelites* to Idolatry and Whoredom, by enticing them to eat with

with the *Moabites* of their Idol-ſacrifices, *Numb.* 25. 2. & 31. 16. And it was againſt this Seduction by falſe Teachers, that St. *John* admoniſhed the *Chriſtians*, when in the cloſe of his firſt Epiſtle he ſaid, *Little children keep your ſelves from Idols.*

How far this device of ſinful compliance with Unbelievers, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, did ſucceed to draw them over to them, to become ſuch *Chriſtians* as themſelves, I know not; which yet doubtleſs was one thing they promiſed themſelves in it: yet it's very probable they found by experience, that their complying with the *Heathen*, in going to their Idol-feaſts, did procure them much eaſe, as their compliance with the *Jews* had done, either in freeing them from, or greatly abating that Perſecution, which before they were expoſed unto by profeſſing the Goſpel; which was another thing they promiſed themſelves in it. And there are two things eſpecially which make this probable. The one is, in that this Device of com-

Compliance took with the *Christians*, and prevailed so much in the several Churches, as by the Scriptutes already quoted we see it did. The other is, in that St. *Paul* brings in the *Corinthians* applauding themselves in their happy condition, since the time their new Teachers came among them, to teach them a more easie and safe way of professing the Gospel, than *Paul* had done, in 1 *Cor.* 4. 8, 10. *Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: We are fools for Christs sake, but ye are wise in Christ: we are weak, but ye are strong: ye are honourable, but we are despised: even unto this present hour, we both hunger, and thirst, are naked, and buffeted, &c.* They had Halcyon days now, as they thought, in comparison of what they had before. And it appears, that this Church of *Corinth* especially, was infected with this contagious Disease, in that St. *Paul* hath it so often up, arguing against it, warning them of it several times, and in both his Epistles to them. And the

the eaſe they found by it, was in all likelihood, as I ſaid, the temptation by which it prevail'd ſo much among them as it did.

S. 5. Other things alſo they did, in *corrupting* the *Chriſtian* Religion, to *ingratiate* themſelves with the Enemies of it; whereof *Worſhipping of Angels* I may name for one, againſt which the Apoſtle warned the *Chriſtians* in *Col.* 2. 18. ſaying, *Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility and worſhipping of Angels, intruding into thoſe things which he hath not ſeen, vainly puft up with his fleſhly mind.* Whether this was done and taught in compliance with thoſe *Heathen* who followed the way of *Platonick* Philoſophy in this, as ſome think; and St. *Paul* had ſaid before, in *ver.* 8. *Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through Philoſophy and vain deceit*: or whether to draw near to the *Pagans*, who had their *Dæmons*, their *Baalims*, or Lords, to whom they addreſſed themſelves as Mediators to their

their Superiour Deities, I shall not determine: But I think there is little question to be made, but that this their falling back to the Rudiments of the World, as well as other their Sophistications, was to serve themselves in their worldly design.

S. 6. Furthermore, They denied the *Resurrection* of the Body, in compliance with the Enemies of *Christianity*. The *Pagans*, and likewise the *Sadducees*, which were a prevailing Sect among the *Jews*, held no Resurrection of the Body after death. And we find that this Heretical Opinion was set on foot in the Church of *Corinth*, by some among them, 1 *Cor.* 15. 12. *How say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?* And we have little reason but to think, that those who did put it on foot there, did so, the more to curry favour with the Opposers and Persecutors of the *Christians*, who profest a belief of the Doctrine of the Resurrection; because that for the same reason

reaſon they did unduely comply with them in other things, as I have ſhewed. And becauſe this was ſo manifeſtly contrary to the Goſpel, which yet they profeſt, that in denying that, they did in effect deny the Goſpel; therefore to bring themſelves off from this ſelf-contradiction in their Profeſſion, when they felt themſelves hard preſt with it, they fell to quibling with this Doctrine of the Reſurrection, and to put *myſtical* Interpretations upon it, (as ſome in our days have done) *ſaying, That the reſurrection was paſt already*, as *Hymeneus and Philetus* did, in 2 *Tim.* 2. 17, 18. They taught it ſeems, That what is ſo oft affirmed in the Goſpel touching the Reſurrection, was to be underſtood of a Reſurrection then already paſt.

S. 7. Again, To *increaſe* their Party, and to *ſtrengthen* their Intereſt, they broached Doctrines of Libertiniſm and Licentiouſneſs, which is a courſe that uſually proves too ſucceſsful in drawing corrupt Men to be on the

the side of such Teachers, and for the sake thereof, to espouse other of their Opinions. Such Men will run after such Teachers, *heaping to themselves*, as St. *Paul* saith, *teachers after their own lusts*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. St. *Peter* speaking of this course of theirs, in 2 *Pet.* 2. 18, 19. saith, *When they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh those who were clean escaped from those who live in errour: While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption.* As in the things beforementioned they corrupted the *Christian* Religion in point of *Worship*; so in this, under consideration, they corrupted it in point of *Manners*.

Fornication was held a thing lawful among the *Gentiles* (*Acts* 15. 29.) and the false Teachers, to make themselves Friends of the World, taught the *Christians* to esteem it lawful too, *Rev.* 2. 20. *Thou sufferest the woman Jezabel, who calleth her self a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, &c.* And so

again

again, in *ver.* 14, 15. *Thou haſt them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, &c. ſo haſt thou alſo them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.* This ſort of Men *had eyes full of adultery, beguiling unſtable ſouls,* as St. *Peter* ſaith, 2 *Pet* 2. 14. *They crept into houſes, and led captive ſilly women, laden with ſins, and led away with divers luſts,* 2 *Tim.* 3. 6.

They taught it alſo to be lawful to caſt off *Obedience* and *Subjection* to Governours, both Maſters and Magiſtrates, under pretence of their *Chriſtian Liberty* by the Goſpel; which was a Doctrine very taking with many, eſpecially *Jews*, many of whom were otherwiſe of themſelves, upon all occaſions, forward enough to caſt off the *Roman* yoke. Upon this account theſe Seducers were ſaid to *deſpiſe government, and to ſpeak evil of dignities.* 2 Pet. 2. 10. Jude 11. *And to periſh in the gainſaying of Core,* who, as we know, oppoſed *Moſes* and *Aaron* in their Government. Againſt this Seduction St. *Peter* cautions the *Chri-*

Christians, 1 *Pet.* 2. 16, 17. when he ſaith, *As free, and not uſing your liberty as a cloak of maliciouſneſs, but as the ſervants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King.* And ſo doth St. *Paul*, 1 Tim. 6. 1. *Let as many ſervants as are under the yoke, count their own maſters worthy of all honour, that the Name of God and his Doctrine be not blaſphemed.*

S. 8. Furthermore, they grew to this at laſt, that if all their other Compliances would not ſecure them from ſuffering Perſecution for owning the Name of *Chriſt*, they taught, That then, in caſe of neceſſity, and before a Judge, it was lawful, and matter of liberty, to *deny Chriſt in word*, provided they did but *inwardly* retain a belief in him in their hearts. Of theſe St. *Peter* ſpeaks, ſaying, *There ſhall be falſe teachers among you, who privily ſhall bring in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them*, 2 Pet. 2. 1. And St. *Jude* ſaith, *ver.* 4. *That*

That there were certain men crept in unawares, turning the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs, and denying the onely Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

And thus we ſee how the falſe Apoſtles, and their Followers, by complying with the unbelieving *Jews* on the one hand, and *Gentiles* on the other, corrupted the *Chriſtian* Religion, out of a carnal worldly deſign, quite contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of the true Apoſtles, whoſe Exhortation as they ſaid, *was not of deceit, nor of uncleanneſs, nor in guile*, as the others was; *but as they were allowed of God to be put in truſt with the Goſpel, even ſo they ſpake, not as pleaſing men*, as the other did, *but God, which tried their hearts. Neither at any time uſed they flattering words, nor a cloak of covetouſneſs*, as the other did, 1 *Theſ.* 2. 3, 4, 5.

S. 9. But poſſibly this may riſe in the minds of ſome, as an Objection, That St. *Paul* himſelf did in many things *comply* both with the *Jews* and

Gentiles. For doth not he himſelf ſay, *That unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law; to them that are without Law, as without Law, to gain them that are without Law; and that he became all things to all men,* 1 Cor. 9. 20, 21? And if *Paul* were not to blame in doing ſo, how came the other to be ſo faulty by reaſon of their compliances? But, in anſwer to this, let it be conſidered, that the difference between the compliance of St. *Paul* and that of the falſe Apoſtles, was vaſtly great.

Firſt in the *end* of it, The governing end of the falſe Apoſtles in their compliance, was *earthly, worldly, carnal,* as I have ſhewed: but the end of St. *Paul* in his, was purely *ſpiritual,* it was for the furtherance of the Goſpel and mens ſalvation thereby. This appears from that place, and thoſe very words from which the objection is raiſed. When he became as a *Jew* to the *Jews, it was to gain the Jews:* and when

when he became as without Law to them that were without Law, *it was to gain them:* And, as it follows in the 22. and 23. Verſes, *I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means ſave ſome: and this I do,* ſaith he, *for the Goſpels ſake.*

Secondly, The difference was vaſtly great in the *nature* of their compliance as well as in the end. The falſe Apoſtles complied with the *Gentiles* in the Rites of their worſhip and corruption of manners, to the apparent *breach* of the Laws of God, the doctrine of Chriſt, and precepts of the Goſpel. But St. *Paul* in his compliance with them went not at all *beyond thoſe holy bounds.* For he ſaith, that when he was as without Law to them that were without Law, yet he was not therein *without Law to God, but under the Law to Chriſt*, ver. 21. It's true, the falſe Apoſtles or their Proſelytes, did report of *Paul* (and it's like it was from his compliance for the Goſpel ſake that they did ſo) *that he ſhould ſay, Let us do evil that good may come,*

but St. *Paul* rejected it as a *ſlanderous report* of them whoſe damnation is juſt, *Rom.* 3. 8. They really did it themſelves, but would have faſtened it upon him.

St. *Paul*'s being as without Law to the Gentiles which were without the Law of *Moſes*, was but his *encourageing* and *ſtrengthning* them in that opinion, that there was no need that the believing Gentiles ſhould be circumciſed or keep the Law of *Moſes*, as ſome would have had them: *And he blamed Peter as not walking uprightly according to the truth of the Goſpel, when he did otherwiſe, and compelled the Gentiles to live as did the Jews*, Gal. 2. 14.

And then as for *Paul*'s becoming as a Jew to the Jews that he might gain the Jews; it's true, when he ſaw that his indulging the uſe of the Jewiſh Rites only among the Jews, as things *lawful* but not *neceſſary*, would further the ſucceſs of the Goſpel in propagating the Chriſtian Religion among them, he *yielded* to them therein, as in

Acts

Acts 21. And for the ſame cauſe circumciſed *Timothy:* for his Mother being a Jeweſs, and *Paul* having a mind to have him go forth with him in the work of the Goſpel, he took and circumciſed him becauſe of the Jews which were in thoſe quarters, who otherwiſe would probably have oppoſed that undertaking, or at leaſt would not have accepted of his ſervice. *Acts* 16. 3.

But the falſe Apoſtles to *pacifie* and to *gratifie* the Jews who raiſed perſecution againſt *Paul* and others for taking in the believing Gentiles into an equality with the believing Jews, without being circumciſed, did teach that it was *neceſſary* that the believing Gentiles ſhould be circumciſed, and obſerve the Law of *Moſes*, and that they could not be ſaved without it, as I ſhewed before. And in this St. *Paul* was ſo far from complying with the Jews, as the falſe Apoſtles did, that he ſtrenuouſly *oppoſed* them in it, teſtifying to thoſe believing Gentiles that were in this enſnared by the falſe Apo-

ſtles, or in great danger of being ſo, ſaying, *Behold, I Paul ſay unto you, that if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing*, Gal. 5. 2. And again, ver. 4. *Chriſt is become of none effect unto you, whoſoever of you are juſtified by the Law, ye are fallen from grace.* And therefore when ſome of theſe *falſe brethren were privily and unawares brought in to ſpie out the liberty* which was uſed in owning and receiving the Gentiles without Circumciſion, and to try if they could bring them into *bondage* by procuring *Titus*, who was a *Greek*, to be Circumciſed; St. *Paul* ſaith, *That to theſe they did not give place, no not for an hour, that the truth of the Goſpel might continue with them*, Gal. 2. 3, 4, 5. Implying plainly that ſuch a complyance with the Jews in yielding *Titus* a Gentile to be Circumciſed, conſidering the *circumſtances* under which the falſe Apoſtles urged the Circumciſion of the Gentiles, would have tended to a *corrupting* of the Goſpel in the minds of the Chriſtians, and have miniſtred an

advan-

advantage to the falſe Apoſtles.

And now I ſuppoſe it appears that the compliance in *Paul* with the Jews and Gentiles, differed as much both in the nature and end of it from the compliance of the falſe Apoſtles, as Vice and Virtue differ. And that they did differ, the falſe Apoſtles underſtood well enough, and therefore hated *Paul* and the ſincere Chriſtians as their oppoſites, and joined with their perſecutors in perſecuting of them; ſtill the more to ingratiate themſelves with them. Theſe were of thoſe, as I ſuppoſe, that, St. *Paul* ſaid, *Preached Chriſt of envy and ſtrife, of contention, and not ſincerely, ſuppoſing to add affliction to his bonds*, Phil. 1. 15, 16. Of theſe it was, as I apprehend by the ſcope of the place, that St. *Paul* ſaid; *But as then he that was born after the fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the ſpirit, even ſo it is now*, Gal. 4. 29. Of theſe St. *John* ſpeaks, as I take it, when he ſaith, *He that ſaith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkneſs until now*,

1 John 2. 9. and cautions the brethren that they *be not as Cain*, as some false Christians were, *who slew his brother because his own works were evil and his brothers righteous*, 1 John 3. 12.

S. 10. Having shewed how the Christian Religion was corrupted by the false Apostles on purpose to promote their secular design, I might now shew yet a little further, how lamentably the Apostolical Churches were in a little time over-run with it, and many of the Members thereof sowred with this Leaven, as St. *Paul* feared they would, when he said in reference to those corrupters, *A little Leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and wisheth that they were cut off that troubled the Church*, Gal. 5. 7, 8, 9. Probably this their being neither directly and wholly Christian, nor Jew, nor Pagan, but a mixture of all, to keep fair quarter with all, was the crime of the Church of *Laodicea*, in being *neither hot nor cold*, neither fish nor flesh, as we say, neither Christian, Jew, nor Pagan,

Pagan, but a compoſition of all together, and yet thought themſelves in a brave condition, *rich and increaſed in goods and had need of nothing.* Juſt as ſome of thoſe in the Church of *Corinth* upon the ſame account thought themſelves to be, as St. *Paul* repreſents it in 1 Cor. 4. 8. *Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as Kings without us.* They applauded themſelves in that they had found out, as they thought, a wiſer way of being Chriſtians, than the Apoſtles and others had done: for they, as they thought, could hold the faith of the Goſpel, and their worldly enjoyments too. Whereas others which they thought more imprudent in profeſſing the Goſpel, expoſed themſelves to the ſpoiling of their Goods, and the loſs of all things. To ſuch as theſe it was, I conceive, that St. *Paul* ſaith thus, in 1 Cor. 3. 18. *Let no man deceive himſelf: if any man among you ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world,* (mark that, wiſe in this world) *let him become a fool that he may be wiſe.* That is, let him

him become such a Christian as those who by a faithful and close adherence to the doctrine and precepts of the Gospel, exposed themselves to the loss of all in this world, and were counted fools for so doing, by the false Apostles and their adherents; that he may be wise to purpose, wise for the world to come. So here, in *Revel.* 3. 18. Christ in opposition to this carnal conceit of the *Laodiceans* of their being *rich*, counsels them to *buy of him Gold tryed in the fire that they might be rich* in deed, and not in conceit only. That is, as I conceive, that they would not *shrink* at the *fiery tryal* as St. *Peter* calls it, which his faithful followers patiently endured for his sake, and which being endured would make them spiritually *rich* indeed, *rich* in the experimental knowledge and proof of their own sincerity and fidelity to Christ; and thereupon *rich* in their assurance of their title to the reward promised to those that overcome; and consequently *rich* also in that consolation, peace, and joy,

joy, which ſuch a knowledge and experience would furniſh them withal, far beyond all mens worldly enjoyments could afford them when preſerved with their faultring and double dealing with Chriſt in their profeſſion of his Religion. *For as the ſufferings of Chriſt abounded* in his faithful followers, *ſo their conſolation alſo abounded by him*, as thoſe who experienced it did teſtifie, 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. Who therefore *gloried in tribulations* of that kind, *Rom.* 5. 3. And therefore well might St. *Peter* ſay, that this *trial of faith*, this proof of the goodneſs of faith, this ſpiritual gold, by enduring the fire, *is much more precious than that of Gold that periſheth, though it be tried with fire*, 1 Pet. 1. 7. And proportionably they are much more *rich* that have abundance of that, than they that have abundance of this.

All this ſerves to demonſtrate the wiſdom and goodneſs of that counſel of Chriſt to the *Laodiceans*, to *buy of him Gold tried in the fire* that they might be *rich*, and not to decline doing ſo, that

that they might retain their worldly riches. And so doth that of buying of him *white raiment to cover the shame of their nakedness*. By which I understand, such an outward conversation in divine worship & manners, as is called by St. *James*, a being *unspotted of the world*, and as is opposed to such an one as is described by *garments spotted by the flesh*, in S. *Jude*, of which some professing Christianity, were guilty by their compliances with the Heathen in their evil customs, to curry their favors as well as to gratifie their own lusts. The other part of our Lords counsel to them was, to *anoint their eyes with eye-salve that they might see*, that is, make a right judgment of the nature of Christianity, and *see* things *a far off* in the other world, to govern themselves by their concernment in those things, and not still remain like those who *are blind and cannot see a far off*, as St. *Peter* describes them, 2 *Pet.* 1. 9. but govern themselves only by the sense they have of present things, nigh unto them and just before them, as bruit beasts do,

do, to which they are compared in that reſpect, when it's ſaid; *In what they know naturally as bruit beaſts, in thoſe things they corrupt themſelves*, Jude verſ. 10. And by underſtanding the meaning of this counſel of Chriſt to them, we may underſtand the nature of their diſeaſe to which this counſel was applied by way of remedy. Their great diſtemper lay in two things; Firſt, in their *carnal compliance* for fear of ſuffering: by reaſon of which compliance they were neither hot nor cold, neither thorow Chriſtians, nor thorow Pagans, nor Jews, as I ſaid, but like *Ephraim* of old, *a Cake half baked, or a ſpeckled Bird* of ſeveral colours, to which *Iſrael* was compared in their declined condition. Secondly, in *applauding* themſelves in that they had by this means found out a way of being good Chriſtians, as they thought, without expoſing themſelves to ſuffering for it, and as if they had been in a happier condition than others that had not done ſo: Whenas by that means, and for that very reaſon,

they

they were miserable and poor, and blind, and naked, and loathsom to Christ, and ready to be *spewed out of his mouth*; far from such a happy condition as they fancied themselves to be in.

This also, probably, was the condition of the Church of *Sardis*, *Rev.* 3. 1. except *the few names in it that had not defiled their Garments* with those pollutions into which the false Teachers had enticed others. For though they *had a name to live*, from that profession of the Gospel which they made, yet were in a manner *dead*, by degenerating and going back again in part into Gentilism or Judaism, from which they had been delivered.

The *loss of first love* in the Church of *Ephesus* also, as it's very likely, befell them by the deceiving of the false Teachers we speak of, that drove a worldly design in professing the Gospel, so as that it might not be too costly to them. This St. *Paul* had foretold, when he said to the Elders of that Church, in Act. 20. 29,30. *I know this, that after my departure shall grievous*

vous Wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the flock: alſo of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things, to draw away Diſciples after them. And he admoniſhed them in his Epiſtle to them, Chap. 4. 14. *That they would be no more children toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſlight of men and cunning craftineſs, whereby they lay in wait to deceive.* And again, Chap. 5. 6. *Let no man deceive you with vain words,* &c. Meaning doubtleſs in all this, to arm them againſt, and take them off from the inſinuations & temptations of falſe Teachers, to draw them into ſinful complyances to eſcape perſecution.

Another hint of this nature we have in the cloſe of his Epiſtle to them, Chap. 6. 24. where he ſaith, *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity*, or with *incorruption*, as it is in the Margin: that is, without *mixing* his Religion with any thing foraign to it, or inconſiſtent with it, for worldly ends as ſome had done.

Our

Our Saviour in *Revel.* 2. 3. commends them for that at first they *had born and had patience to suffer, and for his names sake had laboured and had not fainted.* But then in the 5th. ver. he calls upon them to *remember from whence they were fallen, and to repent and do their first works.* They were now fallen from that love and zeal for Christ, which at first they manifested to him in suffering for him, called here their *first love*, which now they *had lost:* and had now found out an easier way, but withall an impurer way of owning Christ and professing his Gospel. Which change he admonisheth them to repent of, and to return to their first love and zeal in keeping close to the truth and purity of the Christian Religion, whatever the Issue of it might be as to this worlds concerns: for these were their *first works*, as appears by what was said before of them in the 3d. vers. And those Christians that kept to this whatever it cost them, were such as were said to be *Virgins, Virgin Christians*

ſtians that had not violated their chaſtity to Chriſt, but *followed the Lamb* only *whitherſoever he went*, though he led them through fire and water, *Rev.* 14. 3.

I the rather think that corrupt compliances through fear of ſuffering, were the faults of thoſe Five of theſe Seven Churches which came under reproof; becauſe that, for which the other Two of *Smyrna* and *Philadelphia* are commended and not cenſured at all, was their courage for, and conſtancy in the truth of the Goſpel, in the midſt of danger, impoveriſhing and trouble, becauſe of it. *Rev.* 2. 9, 10. *I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich. Fear none of thoſe things which thou ſhalt ſuffer.* Rev. 3. 8. 10. *Thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word and haſt not denied my name. Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I alſo will keep thee from the hour of temptation that ſhall come upon all the world to try them.* Beſides, the promiſe in the cloſe of every one of the Seven Epi-

ſtles, made to him that overcometh, together with the other ſubject matters of them, argues that the being overcome and prevailed with to do unworthily through fear of ſuffering, was the ſin of ſome, and the temptation dangerous to all of them.

S. 11. 2. Having ſhewed you how the falſe Apoſtles carried on their deſign of ſecuring their worldly concerns in their profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion, by corrupting it: I ſhall now come to ſhew how they did it under a *ſhow and pretence* of Religion: which was the laſt thing I propoſed to inſiſt on concerning them and their ill deſign. This courſe taken by them of ſetting off what they did herein with a ſhew and pretence of being very Religious in it, was nothing but what our Saviour had foretold would come to paſs, premoniſhing his Diſciples to take heed of being deceived hereby, when he ſaid, *Beware of falſe Prophets which come to you in ſheeps clothing, but inwardly they are ravening*

ravening Wolves, Mat. 7. 15. They could not carry on their design alone without making a party among them that professed the Gospel, nor that, but under a Religious pretence. And a party they did make to join with them in it, by such means as I shall now briefly instance in.

1. They did it by obtaining the *reputation* among many, of being the *Ministers of Christ*, yea, perhaps of being the *Apostles of Christ*, which indeed some of them pretended themselves to be. Which was of great advantage to them; it being no hard matter for them to corrupt those with whom they obtained such a reputation, and to draw them in to side with them in their design. For when once the people came to esteem them, the Ministers and Messengers of Christ, as well as *Paul* and other Apostles; the false Apostles then came to have a great advantage thereby of drawing them off from those that were the Ministers of Christ indeed, and of bringing them under their own conduct; be-

cause their doctrine tended to secure them from that persecution and loss of worldly enjoyments, which the doctrine of the true Apostles, when followed, exposed them to. And if the people could be brought to give as much credit to the doctrine of the false Apostles as to that of the true, as they must if they believed them to be true Apostles, though they were not: then they could be in no doubt which to follow, for they would then certainly follow them, who, as they believed, taught them how to keep this world, and yet obtain that which is to come too, rather than them who taught them to run almost a certain hazard of this, that they might obtain the next. And it was because of this advantage, that they had the persons of the false Apostles in admiration, *Jude* 16. Now that they pretended themselves to be the Ministers of Christ, and not only so, but that they were esteemed so to be by a party, appears by that of St. *Paul*, where he saith in his own vindication thus: *Are they Ministers*

Miniſters of Chriſt? I am more, 2 Cor. 11. 23. They preached Chriſt indeed, as St. *Paul* ſaith; but it was of *envy, ſtrife, and contention, not ſincerely, ſuppoſing to add affliction to my bonds*, Phil. 1. 15, 16. They envied him the honour and reſpect he had among the Chriſtians, by preaching Chriſt and Salvation by him to them; and ſo they preached Chriſt and Salvation by him too; but yet in a way of oppoſition to *Paul*, by preaching Chriſt *inſincerely*, *mixing* other things with his doctrine, that were more gratifying to the fleſh, and thereby drawing off the reſpect of the Chriſtians from *Paul* to themſelves, which if effected, muſt needs add affliction to his bonds. *They zealouſly affect you, but not well*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *yea they would exclude us that you might affect them*, Gal. 4. 17.

And that they might not be thought inferiour to the Apoſtles of Chriſt, who were extraordinarily ſent, and of a higher ſtanding than any other in the Evangelical Miniſtry; they alſo, ſome of them, pretended themſelves to be

the *Apostles of Christ*, that they might put the more glorious colour upon their design and arts of deceiving. *Such are false Apostles, deceitful workers*, saith St. *Paul*, *transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ*, 2 Cor. 11. 13. Nay, it should seem some of them did not only pretend to an equality with *Paul*, but also to a more unquestionable Apostolick authority than was in him. For they called St. *Paul*'s Apostleship into question, and sought to undermine the reputation of his Apostolical authority. Upon this account, and for this cause it was that *Paul* was constrained to vindicate his Apostleship to the *Corinthians*, as he did in 1 *Ep. Chap.* 9. *Ver.* 1, 2. *Am I not an Apostle? am I not free? have not I seen the Lord? are not you my work in the Lord? if I be not an Apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you, for the Seal of my Apostleship are ye in the Lord.* See farther for this, 2 *Cor.* 10. 8. & 11. 5. & 12. 11, 12. & 13. 3. 6. They insinuated that *Paul* had not *seen Christ*, as those that were truly his Apostles

Apoſtles had, and that he had receiv-ed the Goſpel which he preached, but *from men* and not immediately from Chriſt, and that therefore he might be miſtaken. In oppoſition to which, it was that St. *Paul* ſaid; *I certifie you brethren, that the Goſpel which was preached of me, is not after man: for I neither received it of men, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*, Gal. 1. 11, 12.

But though too many were ſo weak as to be deceived with theſe mens great ſwelling words, yet there were others that were too wiſe to be impoſ-ed upon by their pretenſions to Apoſtleſhip. And ſuch were thoſe of the Church of *Epheſus* for a while at leaſt, till they fell from their firſt love. *Thou haſt tried them which ſay they are Apoſtles, and are not, and haſt found them liars*, ſaith Chriſt to the Angel of that Church, *Rev.* 2. 2. As for ſuch as were deceived and did take them to be what they pretended themſelves to be, Apoſtles; and upon that account could give as much credit to what

they said, as to what *Paul* said: it was no marvel if they thought themselves in a better condition by their coming among them, than they had been in by following *Paul*; in as much as they taught them an easier and cheaper way of being Christians, than he had done, as I have often said. And that they did think themselves in a happier condition, appears by that representation of their thoughts which St. *Paul* made when he said, *now ye are rich, now ye are full, ye have reigned as Kings without us*, 1 Cor. 4. 10.

S. 12. 2. And to gain yet the more credit among the Christians, whom they laboured thereby to seduce, they pretended to *promote the ends of* the Gospel, *holiness and righteousness*, in what they did and taught. For the Gospel is so express for these, that the professors of it could hardly be cheated and corrupted in there profession of it, but under a pretence of promoting these. And therefore there is no question but that these false Apostles talked

talked as high for holineſs and righteouſneſs, and made as great a noiſe about it in ſound of words and name of the thing in general terms (as ſeducers uſe to do) as the true Apoſtles themſelves. And therefore St. *Paul* ſaith *that they transformed themſelves as the miniſters of righteouſneſs*, 2 Cor. 11. 15. They were for *a form of godlineſs* in profeſſion, though they *denied it in the power* and practice of it, 2 *Tim.* 3. 5. They *were wells and clouds without water*, as *Peter* and *Jude* deſcribe them: they in profeſſion promiſed the furtherance of Religion and vertue, as wells promiſe water and clouds rain: but they were but as empty and deceitfull wells and clouds in this.

Nay they did not only pretend to holineſs and righteouſneſs as well as the true Apoſtles, but they pretended to *more ſtrictneſs* in ſome things than the Apoſtles themſelves. They pretended to go farther in mortification and ſelf-denial, than the Apoſtles did, in impoſing upon themſelves and others abſtinence from ſome meats, and from Mar-

Marriage: *forbidding them to marry and commanding them to abstain from some meats*, was part of the doctrine of these seducing Spirits. 1 *Tim.* 4. 18. *Touch not, taste not, handle not*, said they: *which things*, saith St. Paul, *have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh*, Col. 2. 21. 23. They pretended that St. *Paul* and such as he, walked but according to the flesh, in comparison of themselves who lived a more abstemious and mortified Life, as they would have others to think.

I think to be bold, saith St. Paul, *against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh*, 2 Cor. 10. 2. *Let no man judge you*, saith he, *in meat or in drink, or in respect of an Holy day, or of the New Moon, or of the Sabbath dayes*, Col. 2. 16. They were for judging the Christians that followed St. *Paul*, as not so tender and conscientious about these things, as they themselves pretended to be. For that we see hath been and indeed still

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is the manner of Seducers, to pretend to great ſtrictneſs in ſome little things which are not neceſſary in themſelves; thereby to gain a great reputation among people of weak minds, for holineſs, mortification and ſtrictneſs of living, when in the mean time they are deeply culpable in other things of moment, in the eyes of thoſe of more diſcerning Spirits. Like the Phariſees who were for tithing Mint, Aniſe and Cummin, and for divers waſhings, when they omitted and paſſed over the weightier matters of the Laws, *Judgment, Mercy, and the Love of God; yea and made void the Commandments of God, that they might eſtabliſh their own traditions.*

By reaſon of theſe and other like pretenſions, they came at laſt to Separation it ſelf, and withdrew themſelves from Communion with the Orthodox Chriſtians, as if they had not been Spiritual enough for their Communion. *They went out from us*, ſaith St. *John*, 1 *Joh.* 2. 19. *Theſe are they who ſeparate themſelves, ſenſual, not having*

having the Spirit, saith St. *Jude*, *ver.* 19. And yet in this state of Separation, they were so far from becoming a more pure and Spiritual Community, as that they were indeed the *Synagogue of Satan*, as they are stiled, *Rev.* 2. 9. as being most impure, both in principle and practice; and were really *Spots* in the Christian Feasts of Charity, before they separated, *Jude* 12. And therefore it seems somewhat strange that they should fancy themselves to be more Spiritual than the Orthodox Christians. But it seems they esteemed themselves more knowing than others in Evangelical Mysteries, and valued themselves by that knowledge, and so came to arrogate to themselves the Title of *Gnosticks*, or the *Knowing men*. For they to reconcile that which was indeed their corrupting the Christian Religion with that Religion it self, would needs understand the Christian Doctrine in a more mystical sense than the Apostles & Orthodox Christians did. By which, and by wresting the Scriptures of the Old

Old Teſtament to an undue ſence, they *perverted the Goſpel of Chriſt*, making it another thing, *another Goſpel* (as St. *Paul* phraſeth it) than it was in it ſelf, *Gal.* 1. 6. And by reaſon of theſe Myſtical Speculations (which they eſteemed for Divine Illuminations) they conceited themſelves to have fellowſhip with God, even then, when in point of practice they walked in ways of darkneſs; as we may perceive by what S. *John* ſuggeſteth concerning them, when he ſaith, *If we ſay we have fellowſhip with him*, God, *and walk in darkneſs* (as they did) *we lie and do not the truth*, 1 Joh. 1. 6. Which plainly intimates, that they grounded this perſwaſion of their having fellowſhip with God, upon ſomewhat abſtracted from a good and holy life, (which is the proper end and uſe of Divine Knowledge, without which it will do them that have it no more good than it doth the Devils when they have it,) and what could that be but an opinion that their bare knowledge and belief

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of things, invested them with that priviledge? As too many in like manner now a days hope to enjoy partnership or fellowship in the righteousness of Christ, meerly upon account of their belief or Orthodox opinion, though of impure lives. And truly well might St. *Paul* say in reference to these *Gnosticks*, and in this very respect; *if any man think that he knoweth any thing* (and values himself by that knowledge) *he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know*, 1 Cor. 8. 2. These mystical and unintelligible speculations, they called *Science*, though falsly, as St. *Paul* saith: and these they opposed to the plain and intelligible doctrine of the Apostles, (as the Quakers in like manner do theirs) in doing of which, they erred from the faith, as we are told, in 1 *Tim.* 6. 20, 21. ---*avoiding profane and vain babling, and oppositions of Science, falsly so called: which some professing, have erred concerning the Faith.*

Now when they had obtained a reputation among simple people, of being

ing the Miniſters of Chriſt, the Apoſtles of Chriſt, and of being for holineſs and righteouſneſs, and more ſtrict and abſtmeious in ſome things than the true Apoſtles were, and more ſublime and ſpiritual: how eaſie a matter was it then for them to mould the poor ſimple and deluded people into what form they pleaſed, eſpecially in things that tended to their eaſe in the fleſh?

And no doubt but as they pretended to Apoſtolical Authority and to greater ſtrictneſs of life in ſome things, than they would acknowledge in the holy Apoſtles themſelves; So they would pretend likewiſe that ſuch complyances with the Jewes on the one hand and with the gentiles on the other as they adviſed to and practiſed, did tend to the *propagating* of the Chriſtian Religion; and that by ſuch complyances they might *gain* upon their neighbours and friends to come more eaſily over to them in the acknowledgment of Chriſt and profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion. And therefore,

as

as it ſeems, they taxed St. *Paul* with *imprudence* in preaching the Goſpel, and managing his Miniſtry in ſo blunt a manner as they thought he did, to the exaſperating of all ſorts againſt him. For St. *Paul* repreſented the thoughts that ſuch had of him, as had been corrupted by the falſe Apoſtles, when he ſaid; *We are fools for Chriſts ſake, but ye are wiſe in Chriſt, i. e.* in profeſſing Chriſt or the Goſpel of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 4. 8. They thought it ſeems that he had not been ſo prudent in managing the Chriſtian cauſe, as their new Teachers had taught them to be. For ſince they had met with thoſe wiſer methods, as they were taught to eſteem them to be, they had reigned as Kings, free from thoſe diſturbances, oppoſitions and ſufferings, which *Pauls* way of profeſſing the Goſpel had expoſed them to. And thus *by good words and fair ſpeeches, they deceived the hearts of the ſimple, and cauſed diviſions and offences contrary to the doctrine they had once learned*, Rom. 16. 17, 18.

S. 13.

S. 13. 3. When they had gained the reputation aforeſaid among the ſimple and carnal minded Profeſſors of the Goſpel, they could by virtue thereof eaſily incline them without any great ſcruple, to do any thing they would have them, to procure fair quarter from the Unbelievers among whom they lived. And therefore to give themſelves and their ſeduced adherents the greater liberty and eaſe in their minds to do ſuch things as they did in proſecution of their worldly deſign, without any great ſcruple, they broached among them the *doctrine of licentiouſneſs* under the notion of *Chriſtian liberty*. *They turned the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs*, as S. *Jude* ſpeaks, *ver.* 4. Of theſe and the courſe they took in this kind, St. *Peter* likewiſe ſpeaks thus, in 2 Pet. 2. 19. *While they promiſe them liberty, they themſelves are the ſervants of corruption.*

By theſe and other Scriptures it ſhould ſeem, they ſpread ſome ſuch Doctrine as this: That the Grace of God in Chriſt was ſo *large*, that if

men did but believe in Christ, they were in no danger of damnation, though they used a greater liberty than such as *Paul* would allow of. They thought it seems, that *faith without works* would have saved them: a conceit which St. *James* opposed them in, saying, *What doth it profit my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and hath not works? can faith save him?* Jam. 2. 14. And St. *Paul* gives this character of those false Teachers who did resist the Truth preached by the Apostles, just as *Jannes* and *Jambres* withstood *Moses*, *viz.* that they *were men of corrupt minds, reprobate, concerning the Faith*, 2 Tim. 3. 8. They held and taught corrupt notions concerning the doctrine of being saved by Faith in Christ.

And when once they perswaded the people to believe such a doctrine as tended to Liberty and Licentiousness, and yet undertook to secure them of Salvation all the while, upon account of a notional Faith in Christ; what would they stick at, and what would they

they not do, under the notion of furthering and promoting the Chriſtian, the *Catholick Cauſe*, either to ſecure or procure their worldly enjoyments, and to gratifie their various luſts? Many when they perceived that by the doctrine of Faith in Chriſt, men were *freed* from the Law of *Moſes*, in many of thoſe things which before Faith came, the Jews were bound to obſerve, they were willing to underſtand, that this doctrine of the Faith of the Goſpel gave them a greater Latitude in other things alſo than indeed it did. And this opinion as we may well ſuppoſe, occaſioned ſuch cautions as theſe: *Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, only uſe not liberty as an occaſion to the fleſh*, Gal. 5. 13. *As free, and not uſing your liberty as a cloak of maliciouſneſs*, 1 Pet. 2. 16.

Nay, ſome it ſeems went ſo far as to think they might do things in their own nature evil, ſo long as they did them for good ends; *to ſin that grace might abound:* and would have fathered this opinion on the Apoſtles

also, *Rom.* 3. 8. *As we be slanderously reported*, saith St. *Paul*, *and as some affirm that we say, let us do evil that good may come.*

From such Libertine doctrines as these false Apostles broached under the notion of *Evangelical priviledges*; and to procure the more Converts to the Christian profession, sprang, as it is very probable, those cursed practices which turned to the reproach of Christianity, and to the hindrance of its progress, of which we read in 2 *Ep.* of St. *Peter*, and in the *Ep.* of *Jude* and other places.

It's true they were not probably so bad at first as they were at last, but were led from one error to another, till they arrived at last to monstrous heights of wickedness: as we have also seen some in our days have done, who began but in Antinomianism at first; *Evil men and seducers*, saith St. *Paul*, (speaking of those false Teachers,) *shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*, 2 Tim. 3. 13. 2 Thes. 2. 10, 11.

S. 14.

S. 14. Shall I now need after all that I have ſaid touching the deſign the falſe Apoſtles drove and the manner how, to ſay any thing farther to unfold *the working of the Myſtery of Iniquity* in the Apoſtles daies? Seeing all upon the matter, which I have hitherto ſaid, tends, as I apprehend it, to ſhew what we are to underſtand by thoſe words of St. *Paul* in the 2 *Theſ.* 2. 7. *For the Myſtery of Iniquity doth already work.* However take this farther account briefly; In a Myſtery there is one thing hid under another: So that the inward and more ſecret part, is hardly diſcernable but to conſidering men. So it was here in the buſineſs before us: The worldly deſign of the falſe Apoſtles and their corrupting the Chriſtian Religion to accompliſh it, were obſcured and hid under a ſhow and profeſſion of Chriſtianity and Religious pretences, as that the Goſpel did *allow* of what they did, and *ſtood in need* of ſome things they did, to promote it.

Before the Gospel came, the Iniquity of the Gentiles, abominable Idolatries and gross impurities both in worship and manners, was openly profest and practised. But when the Gospel by coming among them had prevailed against these things, *and had turned them from dumb Idols to serve the living God*: Then *Satan* who, as St. *Paul* saith, *can transform himself into an Angel of Light*, did by his ministers labour to corrupt and *entangle again, those who were once clean escaped from them who lived in errour*, the errour of Gentilism: but not so as to profess Gentilism again, but under a *show* of Christianity to return to it in part. The Devil was too subtile to appear so openly as to tempt them to return to downright Gentilism again in the grossest kind. For the Gospel had come among them with such demonstration and power, by the signs and wonders, and mighty deeds which did accompany it, and by that means had so triumpht over the Religion of the Gentiles, that the Devil could have little

tle hope of prevailing with them to return to downright Gentiliſm again, who had been but lately ſo convinced of the truth and excellency of the Chriſtian Religion, as to be brought to renounce Gentiliſm and to profeſs Chriſtianity. But he thought it beſt as the caſe ſtood, to go another way to work with them, and to put them upon corrupting the Chriſtian profeſſion by degrees, by mixing ſomething of Gentiliſm with it under the notion of being conſiſtent with it; yea as tending to promote it, by reconciling the heathen to it by meeting them half way. And that wherewith the Devil, in temptations of this kind, baited his hook, was by inſinuating that by this means they might keep fair quarter with their Infidel neighbours, render themſelves in ſome ſort friends to the world, ſtave off perſecution, and retain their worldly poſſeſſions, together with their Chriſtianity. This I apprehend to be the Myſtery of Iniquity of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks as then already working.

But when the Apostle saith, the Mystery of Iniquity doth *already work*, referring to the time then *present*, he implies that the spreading and more eminent prevailing of it, was to be expected *afterwards* in time then to come: and to this agrees the scope of the place as well as the form of words and manner of speaking there used. For when he saith, *only he who now letteth, will let, untill he be taken out of the way*; it's evident that the more general spreading and prevailing of this Mystery, was for the present hindred, by that which in time would be removed, and that then it should get up to its height. I will not undertake positively to determine who or what is meant by the *he* which the Apostle saith *now letteth*. But this I say, that if the false Apostles corrupting the Christian Religion for worldly advantage, under pretence of that Religion, was not a Mystery of Iniquity, and such a Mystery of Iniquity as was then working, then I confess I cannot imagine what was.

But

But if it were, then that which then hindred all ſuch as profeſt the Chriſtian Religion (as the corrupt Chriſtians did) from riſing to any conſiderable greatneſs in the world, muſt in all probability be it which did then lett or hinder that myſterious deſign managed under pretence of that profeſſion from coming to that growth which afterwards it came to, when that impediment was removed out of the way. And what did or could ſo much hinder ſuch as profeſt Chriſtianity, from riſing to worldly greatneſs, as the then Roman power as *Heathen*? which was ſo far from preferring men for the Chriſtian profeſſion ſake, that it did depreſs and keep them under upon that very account. And if that were it which did lett (and you ſee what reaſon there is to think it was) Then the firſt Biſhop of *Rome* as Popiſh, and thoſe that ſucceeded him, (who when the Roman power as heathen was removed, and now become Chriſtian, did by advantage of that and by corrupt arts under religious pre-

pretences, rise to that greatness in the world as to cause the world to wonder after them,) do fairly seem to be prophetically pointed at by the Apostle, as those which should carry on the Mystery of Iniquity to a greater height and prevalence, when that which hindred was taken out of the way, than it could reach to in the Apostles dayes.

But I need not lay the stress of proving the Authors of Popery to be the *Actors* of the *second part* of the Mystery of Iniquity, upon this contexture of Scripture I have been beating upon: for the thing, I suppose, will appear evident enough of it self, if there had been no such thing written as what we have in 2 *Thes.* 2. For if they out of a worldly design have corrupted the Christian Religion under pretence of Religion as the false Apostles did, Then they must needs be found workers of Iniquity in a Mystery as well as they. And whether they have or no, comes next to be enquired into: which brings me to

to the Second part of what I was to diſcourſe, and that is to *juſtifie my comparing* the Authors of Popery with the falſe Apoſtles, in managing a carnal and worldly deſign in corrupting the Chriſtian Religion under pretence of practiſing and promoting it.

S. 15. To prepare my way to this, I ſhall premiſe for our better underſtanding; that though the deſign and practice of the falſe Apoſtles and the Authors of Popery, agree in the general nature of them; yet they differ in ſome circumſtances. But then that wherein they do differ, does not tend to extenuate, but to aggravate the iniquity of the deſign of the Authors of Popery, and to render it more criminal than the ſame deſign was, whiles, and as it was managed by the falſe Apoſtles. The falſe Apoſtles acting their part in times of open oppoſition againſt Chriſtianity, and of perſecution for ſo much as but confeſſing the name of Chriſt, were under a ſore temptation of doing what they did at the

the first, only to save their lives, and to preserve and get a livelihood in the World. Whereas those that gave the first rise to Popery, taking their turn in the world in Halcyon days and peaceable times, when persecution for confessing Christ, was not only ceased, but then when the profession of Christianity was grown into honourable request with High and Low, they were under no such temptation of doing what they did in the way of their design, either to save their lives or livelihood, or to obtain an honourable estate, becoming Bishops of the Churches of Christ, being therein prevented by the bounty of Christian Emperors. But their design and the means used to effect it, was founded in an excessive thirst and exorbitant desire after greatness and worldly domination exceeding all bounds of moderation. And this difference renders the iniquity of the worldly design in the false Apostles, but little in comparison of what it was in the Authors of Popery. *Solomon* saith, *Men do not despise*

ſpiſe a thief, if he ſteal to ſatisfie his ſoul when he is hungry, Prov. 6. 30. They pitty ſuch as through a kind of ſeeming neceſſity are drawn to do that which yet is no wiſe-juſtifiable under ſuch a Circumſtance, when the ſame thing done by another under no ſuch temptation, is looked upon with indignation.

To acquaint you then with the firſt *riſe* of Popery as founded in a worldly deſign, as at the firſt I acquainted you with the riſe of the falſe Apoſtles and their corrupting the Chriſtian Religion founded in a deſign for this world: I muſt firſt repreſent to you the ill uſe which ſome of the Biſhops made of that peace and proſperity which the Church of God at laſt came to enjoy, when the Emperors and Rulers of the world became Chriſtians themſelves, and imployed their power and greatneſs to encourage and farther the profeſſion and practice of Chriſtianity. For when the Biſhops of the Churches came not only to be protected in the diſcharge of their Function

Function by publick Authority, but alſo to be greatly honoured, and highly advanced for their Profeſſion and Function ſake; ſome of them were not able to ſtand under ſo great a weight of honour as was caſt upon them, without being puft up and tranſported with Pride and Ambition. And this Pride and Ambition put them upon ſtriving and contending for precedency, preheminence, and ſuperiority of Juriſdiction, which ſettled at laſt in a claim of *Supremacy*, made by the Biſhop of *Rome* in arrogating to himſelf the Title of *Univerſal Biſhop*, over all Biſhops and Churches in the world. And out of this pretended headſhip grew by degrees, the whole body of Popery, by which the Chriſtian Religion hath been corrupted.

This exorbitant Power, claimed by the Biſhop of *Rome*, could not be upheld and maintained without the aſſiſtance of ſuch other Biſhops and Presbyters as were willing to own and defend this headſhip. Nor could

that

that be expected without their ſharing in the worldly advantages to be obtained thereby: Nor could that grandeur which they deſigned for themſelves, be maintained without a ſuitable Revenue: Nor ſuch a Revenue be raiſed, had the plain, honeſt, and moderate methods of Chriſtianity been obſerved in it. For if thoſe methods could have been obſerved, and their turn ſerved thereby, they would never have been at the trouble of inventing and defending new ones.

That theſe ends deſigned therefore might be ſerved, certain *additions* to, and *corruptions* of the Scriptures and Chriſtian Religion, were pitcht upon as the likelieſt means to obtain them: but yet to be managed ſo, as that the people might be perſwaded that thoſe *additions* and *corruptions* were either *parts* of Chriſtian Religion, or neceſſary *means* to promote it. And theſe *additions* and *corruptions* are the things which we call *Popery*, and not any other things though held and done

done by Papiſts, which yet are agreeable to the Scriptures, and which other Chriſtians hold and do as well as they. I do not ſay, nor indeed think that the firſt Authors and beginners of Popery, had in proſpect, or did practiſe all the additions and corruptions which afterward were found out by their ſucceſſors, as neceſſary to ſecure and uphold the Uſurped Power and Greatneſs. No more did their predeceſſors the falſe Apoſtles begin with all the evil devices which they were afterwards led to, to carry on their deſign.

I ſhall now therefore come to inſtance in ſome of thoſe *additions*, and to ſhew how they fall in with this worldly deſign projected by the Authors of Popery, and how like they look to what was deſigned and done by the falſe Apoſtles. It may be every one of thoſe additions in difference between Proteſtants and Papiſts, may not directly tend to promote their worldly deſign, though many of them do *remotely*, which do not *immediately:*

But

But yet that will afford them no relief though ſo it ſhould be: Becauſe when men invent ſome errors, for no other reaſon but becauſe they are ſerviceable to them in their carnal and corrupt deſigns; it is not unuſual for God then to give up ſuch men to other abſurd opinions and practices, though not ſerviceable to them in any ſuch way. *Becauſe they received not the love of the truth that they might be ſaved*, (but the love of ſome errors, inſtead and under pretence of truth, that they might compaſs and bring about their worldly deſign) *therefore*, and for this cauſe, *God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſions that they ſhould believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*, ſaith St. *Paul*, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 10, 11, 12.

I intend not to diſpute the ſeveral points in difference between Papiſts and Proteſtants, or to prove them to be ſuch additions and corruptions as I term them to be: for that hath been done many a time over ſufficiently

and abundantly already by Reformed Authors. But methinks it should go as far and signifie as much with the Popish *Laity*, if not much more, as a just and full confutation of those additions as erroneous would do, when they shall come to see how they have been abused and imposed upon by their *Leaders* and *Guides*, and made to believe and do such things for the saving of their Souls, as have no such tendency, but the contrary: and by dancing after their Pipe have been made use of as Engines, meerly to work their ends and to serve their carnal design by them: to squeez and drain them to fill themselves: or as men make use of horses to carry them out of the dirt and to ease themselves by their labour. Which puts me in mind of the *woman that sate upon the Beast, having upon her forehead a name written, Mystery Babylon the great*, &c. Rev. 17.3.5. All that I would desire of the *Laity* is, that they would see with their own eyes, and use their own reason in the things

things I ſhall now lay before them, and not ſuffer their *Clergie* to blow out the Candle, or to hoodwink them, while they play tricks and pick their pockets.

In giving inſtances of the Popiſh corruptions, by which the deſign of domination and worldly greatneſs hath been begun and carried on by the Romiſh Biſhops and their Seconds and aſſiſtance, under a Religious pretence, I ſhall begin with that which was laid as the foundation of the Papal fabrick.

S. 16. Firſt then they would bear the world in hand that the Biſhops of *Rome* ſucceſſively, are St. *Peter's* ſucceſſours, and as ſuch are inveſted with a kind of Apoſtolical Authority, and their See the Apoſtolical See; and that as St. *Peter* was ſuperiour to all Biſhops and Preſbyters in juriſdiction; ſo they, as his ſucceſſours, are ſo too: Yea, that the Biſhop of *Rome*, for the time being, is Chriſts Vicar on Earth, and viſible Head of the Church.

Which claim of theirs puts me in mind of those who *said they were Apostles but were not, but were found liars*, Rev. 2. 2. And if it shall be affirmed that the Bishops of *Rome* are successours of these in their design and pretence; they themselves have given a more cogent proof of it, than ever they did of being St. *Peter's* successours in such headship and power as they pretend to.

But as the false Apostles by pretending to be Apostles indeed, when they were nothing less, did procure to themselves such a reputation with those that were deluded by them, as did greatly advantage them in that worldly design which they undiscernedly carried on under that pretence; just so have the Popes, by making their deluded adherents believe that they are St. *Peters* successors, Christs Vicars and head of the Church, raised to themselves such a reputation as is greatly advantagious to them also in the like but greater worldly design of theirs.

For

For as the Proſelytes of the falſe Apoſtles were by their deluſive perſuaſion, made not only pliant, but even zealouſly active in ſerving them in their deſign; ſo have the deluded adherents of the Popes been in like manner, in ſerving them in theirs. Into what mould may not ſuch men caſt the people, when they have inſinuated themſelves into their opinion, to be ſuch marvellous men as they pretend themſelves to be? The *Galatians* though after the falſe Apoſtles had corrupted them, began to look upon *Paul* with a jealous eye, as if he had been their enemy, by expoſing them to that trouble in profeſſing the Goſpel, which the other taught them how to avoid: yet ſo long as they retained that veneration for him which ſometime they had while they eſteemed him the undoubted Apoſtle of Chriſt; *they could, if it had been poſſible, have pluckt out their very eyes to have given him*, as he ſaith, *Gal.* 4. 15, 16. And when the falſe Apoſtles were taken for true ones, they had ſuch an intereſt in the deluded people

thereby, as that they did even what they would with them. Which made St. *Paul* say, *ye suffer if a man bring you into Bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself*, 2 Cor. 11. 20. Words doubtless applicable to the Popish *Laity* upon as great reason, as ever they were to the deluded *Corinthians*: So great is the power of false opinion, when men, whether false Apostles or Popes, are taken to be what they least are.

Besides, as this lofty claim and high pretence of *supremacy and headship* over the whole Christian world, prepared the Popes way for commanding and doing what he pleased among them that received and owned him in that capacity: So it was the direct road to the highest pitch of Vain Glory; that is, of being esteemed and honoured for what he is not; since all men are wont to proportion the honour they give to men, according to what they esteem them to be. And honey is not sweeter to the mouth, than

than honour and glory is to ambitious minds. And therefore if *Diotrephes loved to have the prehemincnce*, and the falſe Apoſtles thought it a prize worth ſtriving for, to be counted the head of a ſmall party, when but low and kept under in the world; how was his Holineſſes fancy tickled, may we think, with the contemplation of being *Univerſal Head* of the whole Chriſtian World! And what would not ambitious men give or do for ſuch a purchaſe, and to keep it when they have it? *Simon Magus* we know would have purchaſed the power of working Miracles as the Apoſtles did, with money: but for what end? but that he might not be outdone by the Apoſtles, and ſo loſe that high eſteem he had among the people whom he had deceived with his Magick, as if he had been *the great power of God*, even as the Popes have done by their Arts. I appeal to the Papiſts themſelves: is it not apparent that honour from men was a great part of the prize for which the Biſhop of *Rome* ran, when

he first laid his design for Universal Bishop, and to bring all others under him? And hath it not been a sweet morsel to his successors for the time being, to be adored by the people as St. *Peters* successor, as Christs Vicar and visible head of his Church, and to be saluted with the appellation of *The most Holy Lord the Pope*, and to have Kings do homage and kneel to them, yea, and to kiss their very feet? That Pope understood well enough what he said, when he said, *What need of the Net when the Fish is caught?* Certainly this seeking and receiving honour from men at this rate by the Popes, hath been no very good argument to prove themselves St. *Peters* successors, who was so shie, as we know, of being worshipped by *Cornelius*, and of receiving too much honour from men when he had wrought a Miracle indeed: for he said, *Ye men of* Israel *why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though we by our own power or holiness had done this?* Act. 3. 12.

Unity

Unity in Religion indeed hath been pretended as the reaſon of the neceſſity of ſuch an univerſal viſible Headſhip, as the Biſhops of *Rome* have claimed: But *unity* of *Conſent* and endeavour in the people to *honour* them as ſuch, and to maintain them in that magnificence which hath followed that pretence and claim, hath doubtleſs been at the bottom when the other hath been at the top; as is viſible in the effects of it. If this were not ſo, they would never ſo patiently endure thoſe many differences and bitter conteſts about Religion as they do, which are among the ſeveral Orders of men under their Government, provided they do but all agree in owning the Pope and his claim of Succeſſion, Supremacy, and Univerſal headſhip: Whereas let any but whiſper any thing againſt this, and he ſhall quickly find a watchful eye over him, and a heavy hand upon him. So that 'tis *ſelf-intereſt* which is the White aimed at, that ſtill governs in the uſe of what power and preheminence is obtained, though

though other things, to cover the design, are pretended.

S. 17. 2. Another of their corruptions, is a pretence to an *Infallibility* in the Popes, in their *Decrees*, *Canons*, *Constitutions and Determinations*, derived from St. *Peter*, by virtue of their succeeding him. Not that it can be reasonably thought that they can in earnest believe any such thing concerning themselves: For several things uttered and done by them, or some of them, have bewrayed their own misgivings as to this, as I could shew: However they think fit to set a good face on't outwardly to the world, as being a thing necessary and useful for the carrying on of their worldly design. For by perswading the people to believe such a thing concerning them, they get a great advantage to make them become perfectly their *creatures*. For if the people be made to believe that the Popes are Infallible and cannot err in the things aforesaid, then they can have no pretence to dispute any thing imposed

impoſed upon them by them, but according to their own belief, muſt become perfectly Vaſſals, and yield abſolute obedience to them: A thing, than which, what could be more cunningly contrived by the Popes and their Confederates, to ſerve their ends upon the people?

S. 18. 3. And becauſe ſeveral Religious Orders of men were thought as neceſſary to ſupport this Eccleſiaſtical Monarchy, as the *Janizaries* and *Baſſa's* are to ſupport the *Turkiſh*; therefore ſome things likewiſe were thought neceſſary to procure *reverence and reſpect* to the Popes dependants in their ſeveral Orders and Degrees, to the end the people might ſtand the more in awe of them, and be the more ready to yield Obedience to them in execution of the ſeveral Offices and Orders they have received from the Pope their Head. One of which is a power of *Abſolution* and *Forgiveneſs* of ſins, veſted in their Prieſts. Another is a power of making a God for the people to worſhip,

ſhip, by Tranſubſtantiating the Bread and Wine in the Sacrament, into the Real Body and Blood of Chriſt: And who would not be glad of the favour of ſuch wonderful men, and do any thing to pleaſe them? And by *Auricular confeſſion* to a Prieſt, another of their corruptions, they lay the people under their mercy, being thereby maſters of their Secrets, beſides the advantage of giving intelligence in ſpecial caſes, which muſt needs keep them in a continual awe of them. And by their receiving the Sacrament in both kinds, when the *Laity* are ſuffered to receive it but in one, (another of their corruptions) a great and ſacred difference forſooth is put between the *Clergy* and *Laity*. And beſides, the effect of the peoples publick Devotions, is made to depend upon the *intention* of the Prieſt, another corruption; and therefore no need of having their Divine Service in the *Vulgar tongue*, another corruption likewiſe added to that: All ſtill tending to make the people the more

dependant

dependant upon the Clergy, and the more *governable* by them in all things, while they live, and to be in the better diſpoſition to be directed and prevailed upon by them in diſpoſing of a good part of their Eſtates to the uſe of the Church, when they die.

S. 16. 4. Although the Scripture ſaith, *that every one ſhall bear his own burden, and give an account of himſelf to God*: and tho' Chriſt hath ſaid *Search the Scriptures*, and the *Bereans* for doing ſo were highly commended; yet in contradiction hereto, the doctrine of *Implicitie faith* is ſet on foot; by which men are taught *to believe as the Church believes, i. e.* as their Prieſts believe, they believing what the Pope, or the Pope and a General Council of their own, have defined for matter of faith. And this alſo is one of their corruptions; and the *forbidding the Laity to read the Scriptures without licence from their Biſhop*, is another; and ſo is their Tenent that *Ignorance is the mother of devotion*. And what is their end

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in these things? *Unity in the faith*, and to *keep people from running into heresie*, is pretended: (and is not puting out a mans own eyes that he may be led by another, a good expedient not to miss his way?) but their end is to *secure* their corrupt principles and fraudulent arts from being *inquired* into by the people; and that the *Laity* may depend upon them as infallible Oracles, even in those things which are imposed upon them under one Religious pretence or other, when in truth it is but to serve the Pope and his Clergies interest, and to work their ends upon them undiscovered. It is that the people might entirely and tamely resign up themselves to them, and be wholly at their dispose in what they would have them believe and do, though otherwise it should seem to them never so unreasonable. And therefore *Bellarmine* (*de Rom. pontif. l.* 4. *c.* 5. *fin.*) was not ashamed to affirm, *that if the Pope should err in forbidding Virtues and commanding Vices, yet the Church were bound to believe*

Vices

Vices to be good and Virtues bad, unleſs ſhe ſhould ſin againſt conſcience. But when the blind that are led and the blind that lead, are both in the ditch, it is not their ſaying they were led thither, will help them out.

S. 20. 5 Furthermore, although Chriſt upon occaſion of the two diſciples deſiring of him that they might ſit the one on his right hand and the other on his left in that temporal Kingdom they fancied he was to have, ſaid to *Peter* and all the Apoſtles, *Ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exerciſe dominion over them, and they that are great exerciſe Authority upon them, but it ſhall not be ſo among you*: I ſay, though this be ſo expreſs as you ſee, yet notwithſtanding the Pope as pretended ſucceſſour to St. *Peter*, claims a Supremacy *over Kings*, and a priviledge to be *appealed to* as the laſt and higheſt Tribunal upon earth. And in caſe any Kings turn hereticks to him in denying his Claim and caſting off his yoke, he takes upon him

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a power to chastise them; to excommunicate them, and then to depose and dethrone them, and to dispose of their Kingdomes, and to absolve their subjects from the duty of their allegiance to their natural Prince.

And for what reason is this swelling power of overtopping Kings assumed? The pretence is, that the Pope as head of the Church being Superiour to all Christian Kings, as being but members of that body whereof he is head, they upon that account are under his conduct and government in using their secular power for the interest of the Christian Religion and Catholick cause, and for the chastising of such as are heretical, or undutiful and disobedient. This is the Pretence; But the true design is to render the Pope the more *magnificent* and *venerable*, the more *awful and terrible* in the eyes of all, and to *lift* him up to the *highest* pinnacle of worldly Pomp and greatness attainable in this world, and to use the power and interest of such Kings to *support*

port and *ſecure* him in his Pontifical Chair of State, and as *executioners* of his wrath and diſpleaſure againſt all that ſhall but peep and mutter any thing againſt him, or any of his decrees or orders, or give him the leaſt diſturbance.

That this is the deſign, tho' the other be pretended, appears in that the Pope is well enough contented that theſe Kings ſhould *tolerate* or connive at any wickedneſs in their Dominions, though never ſo diſhonourable to Chriſt and Chriſtianity, and deſtructive to his Religion in the power of it, provided they be but tender of *his* Intereſt, and will not connive at any Affronts put upon his Government as Papal. *Men may do what they will, provided they meddle not with the Popes Crown or the Monks bellies*, was the ſaying of *Eraſmus*.

S. 21. 6 Again, as the Popes do claim a ſupremacy over Temporal Princes for *themſelves*, ſo they do a priviledge and *exemption* for their

subordinate Clergie from the *Temporal power*; as holding immediately under their Ecclesiastical Head, the Pope: which is another device to strengthen their Interest. For hereby all his Clergy are the *faster tied* and engaged to their grand Master the Pope, and at the greater liberty *act* securely in abetting his Interest and serving his designs, as occasion and opportunity serves.

Concil. Trid. Sess. 25.

S. 22. 7. As the false Apostles broached Doctrines tending to Licentiousness, to increase their party and strengthen their Interest: so the Authors and Founders of Popery have set on foot certain corrupt *doctrines*, good for nothing but to *increase their party* and *wealth* thereby, and to *strengthen* their Interest. Such is that of a pretended power vested in the Pope, and from him derived to every Priest, of *absolving* men and *forgiving* their sins upon such *easie terms* as the confessing them to the Priest, and doing such slight Penances, as he out of his Indul-

Indulgence to them, if they please him, is pleased to appoint.

And which is yet worse, if worse can be, *viz.* the Doctrine of the Popes power, not only of granting Indulgences for Sins past, but also Dispensations to commit them for time to come. And that such a power is pretended to, we learn from Authors of their own. *Espenseus* hath told us, that *They* allow not only the *Laity*, but also *their very Clergie-men to dwell with Whores and Harlots, and to beget Bastards, for a certain Tax.* Comment on Tit. p. 478. 479. *Also*, De Continentia Lib. 2. Cap. 7. And *the Princes of the Roman Empire assembled at* Noremberg, *in the years* 1522, 1523. complained *that the Popes sucked the marrow of the peoples Estates by Indulgences, and that they heightened the imposture by their hireling Cryers and Preachers, and that Christian piety was banished, while to advance their Market, they cried up their Wares, for the granting of wonderful peremptory pardons, not only of Sins already committed,*

ted, but of Sins that shall be committed. So that by the Sale of these Wares, as they said, together with being spoiled of their money Christian Piety is extinguished; while any one may promise himself impunity, upon paying the rate that is set upon the Sin he hath a mind to commit, Fasciculus rerum experendarum, *fol.* 177, 178. And if the people can believe that the Pope hath power by his Dispensations to bear them out for money in such Immoralities, they may as well believe also that he hath power to dispense with their taking of such Oaths, and entering into such Obligations which they never intend to keep, or to do any other thing as bad, especially if it any way tend to the advancing of the Catholick Cause. And if so, by what *Test* can they be discovered to be really what they are, when they have a mind to conceal it? or what security can such Oaths or other Obligations be to Protestant Princes, of their true allegiance to them?

And what is said in this is the more con-

considerable, if we add thereto those other two loose Doctrines of theirs, the one touching the lawfulness of their breaking Faith with Hereticks, such as they esteem Protestants to be, and the other the Jesuitical Doctrine of Equivocation with mental Reserves. Wherein also they exactly follow their Leaders, the *false Apostles*. For they, as I have shewed, thought, or at least *taught*, that in some cases they might deny Christ in word, so they did but retain a belief in him in their hearts; and partake with Idolaters in their Idol Sacrifices, so they did but retain in their minds a belief that there were no other Gods but one, and intended not any honour to the Idol.

The very complexion of these, and such like Doctrines, shews them to be calculated, not to promote Religion and Virtue, but to hook in filthy lucre, to gratifie any that will but be for them, in giving scope to their Lusts, and to set men free from all ties of Religion and Conscience, when

they ſtand in the way of their Cauſe and Intereſt. That which the Prophet of Old from the Lord charged upon the Prieſts, then when he ſaid, *They eat up the ſin of my people, and ſet their heart on their Iniquity*, Hoſ. 4 8. falls upon theſe men. For as thoſe were deſirous to have the people ſin that they might have the more Sin-offerings: So theſe are willing, we ſee, that the people ſhould have liberty allowed them to ſin, provided they will but buy the more Indulgences and Diſpenſations.

And ſuch likewiſe is their doctrine of *Aſſuring men of pardon* when they are going out of the world, tho' they have lived never ſuch wicked and vicious lives before, upon condition of *Contrition and Confeſſion to a Prieſt:* Yea upon condition of that Confeſſion and *Attrition* alone: which, as they define it, is *a grief for ſin ariſing only from a fear of Hell.* And I ſhould think no wicked man that believes or fears that there is a Hell, can lightly be without ſuch a ſorrow at laſt. And

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if men could be made to believe or hope that they may keep their ſins and yet be pardoned, at leaſt upon ſuch eaſie terms as we ſee they are taught to believe they may, it would then be matter of wonder that there is no more, rather than that there are ſo many Papiſts in the world.

Such doctrine as this is, doubtleſs, the reaſon, why now and then ſome profligate perſons, and ſo many Thieves and Murderers, when condemned to die, turn Papiſts, that were no better than practical Atheiſts before.

S. 23. 8. And yet leſt their looſe principles and practices ſhould render them too much ſuſpected for Irreligious, they, juſt as the *falſe Apoſtles* before them, would *ſeem* to be even more devout in ſome things than the purer Chriſtians that oppoſe them in their carnal deſigns. And therefore they have impoſed upon themſelves and their Votaries certain things, as parts of Religion, which God hath not made ſo, and are more careful to ob-

ſerve them, than what God hath commanded; as the Phariſees before them were, in reference to their traditions. Such is their abſtaining from ſome ſorts of meats upon ſuch and ſuch dayes; not upon a *Civil* account, which may lawfully be done, but upon a *Religious* account. And it's well if, at leaſt, many of them do not make more conſcience of eating fleſh on a *Fryday* than to ſwear or lie. The exerciſing certain ſeverities upon their own bodies at certain ſet times of the year by way of Penance: the reſtraining thoſe that are in Religious Orders from Marriage: the Vows of Poverty and Single life, are alſo things of like nature with thoſe which the falſe Teachers in the Apoſtles times impoſed upon their Proſelytes, as I have ſhewed. And ſo was the worſhipping of Angels, a thing which theſe Popiſh Chriſtians alſo teach. Nay they pretend to make ſhow of ſuch great love to Chriſt more than others do, as that for his ſake they worſhip ſuch as are related to him,

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as the bleſſed Virgin *Mary* and other Saints: And not only ſo, but to worſhip his very Picture, and to have in ſacred eſteem the very Reliques of his ſervants, or thoſe which they eſteem to be ſo: Like the Phariſees of old, who *builded the Tombs of the dead Prophets, and garniſhed the Sepulchres of the Righteous* that were dead; when at the ſame time they perſecuted thoſe that were living, as theſe alſo have done.

By ſuch arts as theſe they have made a covering, ſuch as it is, for their Irreligious deſigns, by which they have deluded people of groſs minds that are influenced by ſenſe in the way of Religious worſhip, as Superſtitious and Idolatrous perſons alwayes have been, but have miſapprehenſions of the Nature of God, and of that Spiritual worſhip which is agreeable to his Nature and acceptable to him. Which alſo makes them think that the eating of Chriſt's Fleſh and the drinking of his Blood in the Sacrament in a natural and proper ſence, is that which is available: like the

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Capernaumites, who said, *how can this man give us his Flesh to eat?* understanding him in a gross sence, when he had said to them, *The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world: And except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*, Joh. 6.

Moreover, to raise yet the greater opinion in the people of the goodness of their way, they ingross the whole of true Christianity to themselves, stiling those and those only of their way, the *Catholique Church*; denying Salvation to belong to those that are not of it, accounting them Hereticks. Herein likewise following the guise of the false Apostles and their Disciples, who laboured to ingross to themselves the name and reputation of the most Knowing and most Spiritual, separating from the rest of Christians, as if they themselves only had been the true Church, thereby to put the better colour upon their corrupting the Christian Religi-

gion,

gion, and the worldly end for which they did it.

S. 24. 9. And then to fill the Churches treaſuries, and to draw to themſelves the wealth of the world, and thereby to ſupport all their glory and grandeur, and to glut themſelves with ſenſual pleaſures and delights, they have uſed other methods and Arts alſo. One of which is the doctrine of the *Merit* of good works; For when the people are made to believe that they may by good works, Almſdeeds, and Donations to pious uſes, make *ſatisfaction* to God, procure *exemption* from Purgatory, and *merit* Heaven; and by abounding in them may *ſupererogate*; and not only merit enough for themſelves, but have to ſpare for others; Then it is no hard matter to perſuade them to be very liberal and kind to their Ghoſtly Fathers while they live, being to them in Gods ſtead to pardon them, and to leave a conſiderable part of their eſtatesto the Church, when they die.

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The forbidding Marriage to the Clergy serves to the same end also; which may be one reason of that restraint. For when they, especially those of the higher degree that have great Estates, can leave no Children lawfully begotten to inherit; who is likelier to be their Heir than the Church? especially considering that the Canon Law allows not Regular Bishops to dispose of their Estates by Will.

Another device to get money, is the *Tax of the Apostolick-Chancery*; a grant by several Popes of Pardons, at such and such a price for thousands of years, though their sins be of a deep die. It is true, there are, I must needs say, very good peniworths to be had, if the Ware be not counterfeit: One may have that for 18 Pence, 2 Shillings, or half a Crown, that a man would give all he is worth for, be it never so much, were he sure he should not be cheated in his purchase. But as for all those that have faith enough to believe the Infallibility

lity of the Popes, in aſſuring them of Pardons at ſuch *cheap* rates, (and if they queſtion it in this, they may queſtion it in all the reſt,) methinks there ſhould not one of them fail to buy one of theſe Pardons that can go to the price of them: and who cannot? And if ſo, who can count the vaſt ſums of money which we may reaſonably conceive this device will bring into the Popes Exchequer from age to age?

Another Engine for the ſame purpoſe, is *Shrine Oblations:* that is, the Offerings which the people make when they go on Pilgrimage to viſit the Shrine of ſuch or ſuch a Saint, whether voluntarily, or in a way of Penance. And the Treaſuries of the Shrines of ſome eminent Saints, are upon this account ſo rich, as that it's ſaid they may vie it with the Treaſuries of Great Princes.

Another Screw is, *Commutation of Penances*; that is, the buying off the doing of ſuch or ſuch Penance, for ſo much money as the Confeſſor or Ghoſtly

Ghostly Father shall be pleased to excuse them for: and he knows well enough how to put the price according to the ability of the purchaser; and so he doth also how to make the Penance greater or lesser as he pleases. And this falls out so often, and with so many in all Popish Countries, that the Income thereby must needs be very great, besides the ordinary Tithes they receive.

The fictitious *doctrine of Purgatory*, to name no more, is, I assure my self, none of the least of the Artifices of the Founders of Popery, to accumulate a prodigious mass of wealth: of which Doctrine and device, take this brief account. First, The people are made to believe, that though God pardons Mortal Sins to the truly penitent, so as to free them from Eternal Torments; Yet since they have much Venial Sin and Corruption, in which oft-times they die, not having made sufficient satisfaction by Penances enjoyned them here, they must expiate these, and satisfie for them, by

by ſuffering the pains of Purgatory. And farther, they muſt believe alſo, that the Church hath a Treaſure or *ſtock of Merits* ariſing out of Works of Supererogation done by ſuch as have merited more than enough for themſelves, the *over-plus* ſtill running into the *common ſtock*: and that the Pope, and Prieſts from him, have the power of *diſpoſing and applying* theſe out of the common ſtock to particular perſons that need them. And farther, they are taught to believe that this Treaſure of the Church is not drawn out and diſtributed but by *Indulgences*: and that ſince theſe Indulgences are for the *relief* of the Churches *Indigences*, they are not to be obtained without being *purchaſed*. Now when the poor deluded people are made to believe all theſe idle Fictions for real Truths, and come to have their Conſciences awakened on their Death-beds; what will they not give to obtain theſe Indulgences, and for Maſſes to be ſaid, and Prayers to be made, that they may be delivered from Purga-

Purgatory, a place of Torment little less than Hell. Skin for skin and all that a man hath, will he give for his Life; how much more for his *Soul!* So that the fruit and effect of this device, as we may well conceive, is no small or inconsiderable thing. And therefore it was no less truly than wittily said, *The fire of Purgatory keeps the Popes Kitchin warm, and makes his Pot to boyl.*

I shall instance in no more: but these I have named are some of the Arts, and part of the Craft in the Mystery of Iniquity, by which, *Demetrius* like, *they get their wealth.* And truly so vastly great hath been the Annual Income of the Court of *Rome* from all Nations of their Communion, that according to the account given from amongst themselves, by *Matthew Paris* for one, (*M. Par. Hist. An.* 1252.) its yearly Revenue from *England* alone, by one way and another, more than I have named, amounted to no less heretofore, than twice so much as the then Kings Revenue.

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"No marvel then if the Biſhops of "*Rome*, and their Cardinals, former-"ly poor Prieſts and Deacons, are "now become Illuſtrious, and for "Pomp and Magnificence, able to vie "it with great Princes, and to raiſe "their Families, Nephews and Nie-"ces, to Dignities and Fortunes ve-"ry great, as is well known to the "World.

S. 25. And now I having made this Compariſon between the *falſe Apoſtles* and *Founders of Popery* in their worldly deſign and curſed means of accompliſhing it; all that I ſhall deſire of the *Lay* Catholicks, as they call themſelves, is, that they would but beſtow ſo much *conſideration* upon what is here offered, as by which they may come to make an impartial judgment whether or no I have wronged the latter by comparing them to the former. And if I have not, as I doubt not but they will find I have not, if prejudice and prepoſſeſſion do not make them err in judgment, as too

frequently it is wont to do; Then methinks I should not need to use one word to perswade them to desist from following their guides any longer blindfold by an implicite faith; for their own Interest both spiritual and temporal, which useth to be most prevalent with men, will prompt them to this. Can they possibly think it safe for them to commit themselves to the conduct of those, who directly follow the track, and tread in the steps of the *false Apostles*, who for self ends and worldly advantage, Avarice and Ambition, betrayed the Religion of the holy Jesus, and the Souls of men? *Solomon* sayes, *In vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird.* And will they be more silly than the fowles of the Air, in not endeavouring to make their escape when the *Snare* is discovered to them? *Remember this and shew your selves men*, may be said to them, as once it was by the Prophet to others.

But we know the manner of these mens *Guides*; either they will not suf-

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fer them to read diſcourſes which detect their fraud: or if they happen to hear or ſee any thing of that nature, they can, as they would have them think, blow off all with one blaſt of their mouth. I do therefore heartily wiſh that the *Laicks* I ſpeak of, would at laſt be ſo wiſe for their ſouls as to conſider, That when their *Clergie*, whom they follow by an Implicite faith, do make their defence againſt us in what we charge them with, they are then *concerned* in point of a Carnal ſelf intereſt: and where that rules and is predominant, it ſtill obliges men to put the faireſt colour they poſſibly can upon their Cauſe, though never ſo bad, *without* regard to truth; *that* not being the thing they ſtrive for, but their *ſelfiſh intereſt*. And it is the manner of ſuch men, when they have done ſo, to glory over their Adverſaries from the teeth outward, as if they had laid them dead at their feet: When at the ſame time inwardly they feel themſelves ſtruck to the very heart by the clear evidence and unreſiſtable

resistable force of their Adversaries reasonings. And the reason of their doing so is, because they find that thereby they can preserve their interest among the people that have given up themselves to them, and pinn'd their faith upon their sleeves; this course of theirs serving their end as effectually as a real confutation would do.

And herein also they as evidently follow the steps of the *false Apostles*, as in any of those other things I have instanced in. For although they, the *false Apostles*, could not stand before the powerful conviction of the faithful Apostles, but found their hearts to sink within them, as to the Cause they maintained, as knowing in their consciences they were not able by the strength of truth to defend it against the assaults of the holy Apostles: yet then they would in face and outward appearance, glory and boast, as if they had the victory, and all because they had no other way to hold their party to them and to carry on

on their deſign, which they were reſolved to ſtick to, whatever was ſaid againſt it: and alſo becauſe they found that this courſe of theirs would do them as much ſervice as a demonſtration would do among their credulous followers, who hung upon their lips, and were willing to take all they ſaid upon *truſt*, as ſuiting moſt with what they liked beſt. See for this the 2 *Cor.* 5. 12. *We commend not our ſelves again unto you*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *but give you occaſion to glory on our behalf, that you may have ſomewhat to anſwer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart*: meaning the falſe Apoſtles,

All that I ſhall add is only to obſerve from what was laſt delivered, That the *falſe Apoſtles* even then when they ſet the beſt face upon their Cauſe, and gloried over their oppoſers, and carried it outwardly with never ſo great confidence and boaſting; yet ſince their own corrupt *Intereſt* was concerned in the *Conteſt*, there was juſt cauſe for their followers to ſuſpect what they pleaded in

their own defence, and that it was wisdome in them that did so, and folly and unhappiness in those that suffered themselves to be imposed upon and deluded thereby, without looking more narrowly into the matter themselves, as those did who *tryed them that said they were Apostles but were not, and found them liars*, Rev. 2. 2. And if so; then in as much as a Corrupt self interest of Popish Guides is also concerned in and depends upon the cause they labour to defend, as I have shewed; those who have committed themselves to their Conduct, have no more reason to be confident of the goodness of their Cause upon the account of the confidence and boasting of those who undertake to defend it, than the followers of the false Apostles had in reference to *their* cause: But in point of greatest prudence are concerned to look upon all they say with a jealous eye, and with the greatest care and diligence to scan the matter themselves, and to search the Scrip-

Scriptures themſelves, and impartially to conſider as well what is ſaid againſt them and their Cauſe, as what is ſaid for it and them, and not careleſly or deſperately to *venture* their ſouls upon ſuch mens confident pretences, whoſe Corrupt *intereſt* it is to *deceive* them.

APPENDIX.

WHat you ſhall find in this Appendix was firſt intended to be brought in by way of Digreſſion at the cloſe of the Anſwer to an Objection from St. *Paul*'s Compliances, at the end of the 9th. Section of the foregoing Diſcourſe, to which it properly relates. But its running out to ſuch a length as it hath done, hath altered that intention, as tending to too great an interruption in the line and method of that Diſcourſe. And I have the rather thought it meet to add this to the whole Diſcourſe, leſt any ſhould think a compliance in the uſe of ſome undetermined circumſtances in the adminiſtration of Gods Publick Worſhip, ſhould be of like nature with the corrupt compliances of the

falſe

false Apostles and their party, discovered in the said Discourse. That which I have to add therefore upon the foresaid occasion, take as follows.

From what hath been said in the foresaid Section touching St. *Paul*'s Compliances, somewhat may be observed which may be of good use to Christians in many dubious Cases. There I have shewed how that St. *Paul* sometimes withstood the use of Circumcision, and sometimes yielded to it.

The reason of which did arise from the different circumstances that did attend the use of the same thing upon different occasions. When it was urged upon the Gentiles as necessary to their salvation, St. *Paul* withstood it: But to avoid stumbling in the believing Jews, who were not as yet satisfied touching its cessation, and to prevent a breach in the Church, and to gain the more upon such as were inclinable to Christianity, he yielded to the use of that and other like things among them.

I think we may safely suppose that St.

St. *Paul* knew well enough when he did ſo, that Circumciſion was not in it ſelf, or by poſitive command neceſſary to the Jews under the Goſpel, by the taking place of which it was aboliſhed; for he ſaid, *Circumciſion is nothing*, 1 Cor. 7. 19. Nor was it ſimply unlawful in it ſelf; for if it had, no Circumſtance could have ſanctified it or made it lawful. So that when he yielded to it, it was upon account of *Expediency* by reaſon of circumſtances attending it, which made it expedient; ſuch as was the Peace of the Church, and the better propagation of the Goſpel. And yet when he yielded to it upon the account of Expediency, we may well ſuppoſe it was not wholly and altogether expedient without any inexpediency at all, but only *more* expedient than inexpedient. For otherwiſe it may well be thought, that his yielding to the uſe of it ſomewhat tended to nouriſh the opinion the *Jews* had of its perpetuity under the Goſpel, and to miniſter ſome advantage to thoſe who taught a

neceſſity

neceſſity of it unto Salvation, and could not be very grateful to the believing Gentiles who oppoſed it, nor to St. *Paul* himſelf neither. So that in ſome reſpect it was inexpedient to yield to it when he did yield to it, but in other reſpects *more* inexpedient to withſtand it and not to yield to it.

From all which we may obſerve, that when two Inexpediencies come in competition, the one attending the doing, and the other the not doing of the ſame thing, ſo that there is a neceſſity to yield to one of them in doing or not doing of it, then that which is *leaſt* inexpedient, is to be yielded to. Or which is the ſame; that when all circumſtances are conſidered, then that which hath *more* of expediency than inexpediency in it, is to be choſen. Juſt as on the other hand, when two Precepts, the one moral, the other but poſitive, come in competition, the leſs is to give place to the greater.

To fit theſe general Rules to particular

ticular caſes requires ſome skill: but if theſe things were well conſidered and practiſed, it would go a great way towards the leſſening thoſe undue diſtances which are among us. As for inſtance: Suppoſe ſome circumſtances in the external form of our Publick Worſhip, eſtabliſht by Law, were ſo *inexpedient* as ſome deem them to be; Yet if they would but lay aſide Prejudice, Partiality, Paſſion, and Intereſt of Parties in making a judgment of things, by what hath been fairly argued from Scripture by many, to ſatifie doubtful minds concerning them, I am very confident they might eaſily come to plenary ſatisfaction in their own minds touching this one thing, *viz.* That to *bear* with thoſe things for the peace of the Church, and the Intereſt of Religion in general, *is not ſo inexpedient* as it is by dividing the Church, by forſaking that Worſhip, to *expoſe* our Religion to the ſcorn and contempt of Atheiſts, Infidels, and Papiſts, and to occaſion, alas, too many others to become

come ſuch: and as it is, to confound and unſettle the minds of well meaning, but injudicious people, and to betray them into the hands of ſeducers: and as it is to divert mens minds from the ſerious conſideration, ſtudy, and practice of the weightier matters of Religion, and to engage them in contentious janglings, and uncharitable revilings and cenſurings, to the deſtruction of true Piety, and placing Religion much in Opinion, and in being of a different form and party: and laſtly, as it is, to expoſe us all to the danger of the breaking in of Popery, by ſtrengthning their hands who are of that way, and by weakning our own, and by encouraging them in hopes of ſucceſs by our Diviſions, to practiſe upon us, and by all their Arts to improve the advantage we put into their hands by our diſtractions: and yet theſe, and ſuch like, have been the effects of dividing our Church.

And if to *bear* with thoſe external circumſtances of Worſhip, for the ſake of

of the peace and edification of the Church and ſecuring to us our Religion, be not *ſo* inexpedient, as it is to *draw* on us the foreſaid bad effects of our diviſions by withdrawing from the worſhip it ſelf, for the ſake of thoſe circumſtances; Then the Rule before laid down, and according to which St. *Paul* acted, ſhews which of theſe *inexpediencies* (in caſe both ſhould be ſuch) is to be yielded to, and born with, that the other may be avoided.

Now that to *bear* with the foreſaid Circumſtances of worſhip, is not ſo inexpedient, as it is to cauſe diviſions and the Conſequents of them by forſaking the worſhip for their ſake, will eaſily appear by this, *viz.* In that the Lord hath not declared himſelf againſt the former, as he hath done againſt the latter. Although God hath expreſly appointed the ſubſtantial parts of his worſhip, as the miniſtration of the Word, Prayer, and Sacraments, yet he hath not ſo expreſly appointed the external form, method,

method, manner and circumſtances of Adminſtration, as whether it ſhall or ſhall not be adminiſtred according to the external circumſtances required in our Liturgy; but hath left things of that nature to be ordered by general rules of Education, Comelineſs, and Order, according to the beſt ſkill and prudence they have, into whoſe hands the providence of God hath put the ordering of affairs of that nature. And although the external form of adminiſtration of Gods publick worſhip may be comparatively *better* in one Nation or Church than in another (when but all one in *ſubſtance*) as it would be in particular congregations alſo, if all Miniſters were left to their own liberty therein; Yet the *meaneſt* of them would not be *unlawful*, ſo long as nothing is done in *oppoſition* to any divine precept, or to the *defeating* of the end of the external adminiſtration of Gods publick worſhip. But God hath not left men to any ſuch latitude to cauſe or not to cauſe diviſions and offences in the

the Church, as he hath for them to uſe different forms and circumſtances of forms in his publick worſhip: and therefore there cannot be the like reaſon to pretend Inexpediency in ſubmitting to them, as there is in cauſing diviſions and offences in the Church by forſaking the publick worſhip upon account of them. If the honour of God and good of men had been as much concerned in the external form of his worſhip, in not having it in this way but in that, as they are in mens keeping the *unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace*, we have all reaſon on our ſide to think he would then have been as particular and expreſs for this form and againſt that, as he hath been for the peace, unity, and charity of the Church, and againſt their contraries and their contrary effects, which yet he hath not been.

What God ſaid to the *Jews*, when he found them hot for Sacrifices, but cold and careleſs in the

moral part of Religion, may with a little variation be very aptly applyed to our caſe in hand. *I ſpake not unto your Fathers nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the Land of Egypt, concerning burnt Offerings or Sacrifices. But this thing commanded I them, ſaying, obey my Voice, &c. but they hearkened not,* &c. Jer. 7. 22, 23, 24. For when our Lord Chriſt ſees us more nice about forms of worſhip, and more zealous for this and againſt that, than we are for peace and Charity, and the honour and ſafety of our Religion and the good of other mens ſouls, which are greatly wronged and endangered by our diviſions, may he not as truly ſay, *When I gave forth the Goſpel, ſpake I a word to my Diſciples to be hot for that external form of worſhip you contend for in oppoſition to that you contend againſt? But this I ſaid, have Salt in your ſelves and peace one with another: let all your things be done in Charity, endeavouring to keep the unity*

unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: that no man put a ſtumbling block or an occaſion to fall in his brothers way, that none occaſion be given to the adverſary to ſpeak reproachfully; and wo to the world becauſe *of offences, and wo to him by whom the offence cometh: and yet you have not been curious, nice and cautious in theſe as you have been about the other.* Which if true, what account can be given for our breaking the Church in pieces and expoſing our Selves, our Religion and the Spiritual and eternal concerns of others, to ſuch damage, perils and hazards as have been mentioned, and all for the ſake of that which he commanded not? I ſay commanded not, *definitively.*

For doubtleſs they have been under a very great miſtake who have aſſerted that nothing is to be done in the worſhip of God which he hath not commanded, if they mean it not only of the intrinſick matter and ſub-

ſtance of his worſhip, but alſo of all external circumſtances of adminiſtration, as appears, I ſuppoſe, by what I have already ſaid, and by a due conſideration of thoſe very Scriptures upon which that opinion is ſuppoſed to be founded. Such as *Deut.* 17. 3. *Jer.* 7. 31. & 19. 5. & 32. 35. *Levit.* 10. 1. compared with *Chap.* 16. 12. & *Chap.* 6. 12, 13. Where when ſome have been cenſured by God for doing what he commanded them not, it was in reference to falſe worſhip in the *ſubſtance* of it, done in oppoſition to what he had otherwiſe expreſly appointed and commanded, but never in reference to undetermined Circumſtances of the adminiſtration of the true worſhip. And therefore theſe Scriptures when duly conſidered, are without any colour of reaſon or truth alledged againſt the lawful uſe of undetermined Circumſtances of adminiſtration of the Subſtance of Gods worſhip. An opinion doubtleſs it is no leſs dangerous than falſe. For

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ſince it cannot be conceived (as I ſuppoſe) how the publick worſhip other than the uſe of the Lords prayer, and the reading the Scriptures, and the reciting ſome words of Scripture in the adminiſtration of Baptiſm and the Lords Supper, (if ſo much) can poſſibly be managed without doing ſomething therein in reference to external adminiſtration, which is not particularly determined and commanded in the New Teſtament, ſuch a poſition as that muſt needs tend not only to fill mens minds with endleſs ſcruples, and their mouths with endleſs diſputes, but alſo to interrupt and put a ſtop to the adminiſtration of Gods publick worſhip, ſhould it be admitted.

Even under the *Moſaical* diſpenſation, when things pertaining to the worſhip of God were far more minutely determined than they are under the Goſpel, many things were done of a religious nature, and ſome of them more immediately reſpect-

ing the worſhip of God, which yet were neither commanded by God, nor the doing of them cenſured by him, ſo far as appears, ſo long as any thing Commanded by him was thereby neither oppoſed nor juſtled out, nor any thing done in the name or under pretence of things appointed by him, which were not ſo, as the Phariſees did, when *they taught for doctrine the commandments of men.*

Of things of this nature, theſe following are inſtances. The rearing of an *Altar* by the two Tribes and half, for a ſign or *witneſs* that they and their poſterity were people of the God of *Iſrael*, and to prevent Apoſtaſie in their poſterity, *Joſh.* 22. 25. 34. The erecting of a ſtone by *Joſhua* for ſomewhat a like purpoſe, *Joſh.* 24. 26, 27. *Solomons* hallowing the middle part of the temple for ſacrifices, 1 *King.* 8. 64. The keeping of the Paſſeover *fourteen dayes*, by order of *King Hezekiah* and with the

the advice of the Heads of the people, tho' God had appointed but *seven*, as also the Levites then helping the Priest in the Priests appropriate work, 2 *Chro.* 30. The observation of the dayes of Purim: The anniversary fasts of the 4th. 5th. 7th. and 10th. month: The building of Synagogues for publick worship, and appointing governours therein, and the ordering what prayers should be made, and how and after what manner the Law and Prophets should be improved to common benefit by reading and exhortation, and what discipline should be used therein: The determinate hours of prayer in the Temple, *Act.* 3. 1. The altering the gesture and some other things, in eating the Passover, from what was used in the first Institution, and conformed to by Christ himself under that alteration: The feast of Dedication, which Christ graced with his own presence: The admitting of Proselytes by Baptism

as wel las by Circumcision: a practice which our Saviour was so far from testifying his dislike of as a humane invention, that he chose the same rite by which to initiate his disciples.

These things, with what was said before, if there were no more to be said in the case, would be enough to shew that it's no just exception against our external form of publick worship, in that it is not expressly and particularly commanded in Scripture; for if it were, it would be a just exception against every external form of publick worship whatsoever; because there is no one in particular commanded with exclusion of all the rest. Which still plainly renders it a thing more inexpedient, (yea and much more than so) to be *accessary* by rending from the communion of the Church, to the bringing on us all those sad effects of our divisions, which every good man is sensible of, than it is or can be to *bear* with what does

does not ſo well pleaſe them in our form of worſhip as ſomewhat elſe different therefrom would do.

Methinks it ſhould make ſuch as are more conſidering men among thoſe that divide the Church by withdrawing from her communion, to be very *jealous* of the expediency of their practice, when they conſider that before men took this liberty, there was little of the ſad effects forementioned viſible among us, but ſince that, thoſe bad effects are grown notorious and formidable; and that's no honour to Separation that it hath brought forth ſuch fruit: they may know what it is by what it hath done, *by its fruits ye ſhall know it.*

And therefore ſuch as would be loth to lye under the guilt, unrepented of, of being *acceſſary* to the drawing on us the ſad events we ſpeak of, had need to examine again and again whether the grounds upon which they

they have made or incouraged thoſe diviſions, which have been the cauſe of them, be ſuch as will abide the trial before God: and whether they have any ground to think that what they contend for, in caſe they could obtain it, would ever countervail, or compenſate the damage which Religion in its reputation, and the Souls of men have already ſuſtained and are like farther to ſuffer, by the courſe they have taken to effect it.

And when ever they do enter into ſuch conſideration, it will doubtleſs be their wiſdome not to flatter themſelves with conceit (as I fear ſome do) as if they are not, nor can be *acceſſary* to the bringing on us theſe ſad effects of our diviſions, but that they are wholly owing and imputable to our Governours, who, as they perhaps ſuppoſe, have given them juſt occaſion of withdrawing from communion in the publick worſhip by making the terms of it ſo difficult and unſatisfactory as they have done.

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For tho' that which they ſurmiſe ſhould be ſo far true, *viz.* That the conditions of communion are made more uneaſie unto ſome than they need to be, yet it will not follow but that tho' the Governours in ſome reſpect do ill in doing ſo, the people may do very well in ſubmitting to them, tho' leſs pleaſing to themſelves, rather than by cauſing diviſions, by not ſubmitting to them, to draw on ſuch things as may well diſpleaſe them much more than the uneaſie terms of Communion need to do, as long as they are but only *leſs deſirable* and not *abſolutely ſinful* in themſelves, as doubtleſs thoſe in queſtion are not: For if they were, it would be wonderful that ſo many wiſe, inquiſitive and good men as well of the old Nonconformiſts as others, as ſince the Reformation have ſubmitted to them, ſhould not be ſenſible of it; No not after all that could be ſaid to work ſuch a ſenſe in them by ſuch as have turned every ſtone to do it. And

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it is not altogether inconsiderable to remember, that however the case is now, yet in the Apostles dayes they were such Christians as were *less knowing* in the right use of their Christian Liberty, that caused troubles in the Church about things indifferent in their own nature, *Rom.* 14.

These things I have noted upon this occasion, for no worse end than to satisfie the Scrupulous, That although they should not or could not be perswaded that our external form of publick worship is best in it self, yet that to conform to the use of it under present Circumstances, is not only lawful, but also very *much better* than to be *accessary* to all the evil effects and consequences of our divisions and causeless Separations; and that there is upon account of the danger of being so, *much more cause* to scruple *Nonconformity* than Conformity to our form of publick wor-

worſhip. But if all the arguings and reaſonings which have been uſed by many ſhall ſtill fall ſhort of their deſired effects to cloſe up our unhappy breaches, and to heal our diviſions; the conſequences of them are ſo dreadful, that I could then heartily wiſh, that if the Higher powers think it fit, and rather than the wounds of our Church ſhould be ſtill kept bleeding to the exhauſting of her ſtrength and the endangering her very life and being, that a *Sacrifice* were made of ſome ſuch things as can leaſt be born with and beſt ſpar'd, to the publick peace and tranquillity of the Church, if that might procure it; Peace and Edification being the ends unto which all External circumſtances of order are to be accommodated by way of means.

Thus much I thought good to add, touching the point of Expediency from St. *Paul*'s example.

THE END.